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***‘Kyopo’ Daughters in Germany: The Construction
of Identity among Second-Generation German-
Korean women in Germany***

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01.01.2012

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

University of Sussex

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**‘*Kyopo*’ Daughters in Germany: The Construction of Identity among Second-
Generation German- Korean Women in Germany**

This thesis explores the construction of identity amongst the second generation of South- Korean migrants to Germany in Frankfurt am Main, focussing mainly on women. Overwhelmingly, when talking about migrants the German media focus on the Turkish minority. Literature follows a similar pattern. However, West Germany recruited South Korean nurses and miners during the 1970s as labour migrants. Today, they and their children constitute the largest South Korean minority in Europe. In this thesis I examine the second generation of the Korean minority in relation to broader discourses on migrants and integration in Germany, and trace the dynamics of identification and self-understanding. Central to these are narratives of shared experiences, of having Korean parents and of living in German society, particularly in relation to discourses in which they are identified as foreigners. Korean parents impart a sense of “Korea” as a source of timeless tradition and practices; whereas “Germany” is a setting for their everyday lives. These shared experiences are mobilised as a framework for negotiating identities. In contrast to the essentialist understanding of identity invoked by Germany society, the second generation describe themselves as *kyopo*, a Korean term meaning “Korean living in a foreign country” and which, in the German context, means “Second-generation German-Korean living in Germany”. This thesis looks at the ways Korean-Germans articulate the possibilities and limits of *kyopo* identity in relation to narratives and discourses on ‘Koreanness’ and ‘Germanness’, and in the context of social interactions. I focus especially on the ways in which this occurs for women, whose experiences are often marginalised in the process of *kyopo* identity negotiation. They are caught between the need to expose the problems of male privilege and the desire to unite with Korean-German men to contest the German discourse on integration and foreigners that confines them both.

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1.Introduction

I have never been interested in football. My parents have never been interested in football. Still, beginning three days before that World Championship match Germany versus the Republic of South Korea in 2002, my parents developed a sudden interest. I was studying in the UK at the time and a few German friends had invited me to watch the game in our students' union pub. I must have mentioned that to my parents, who – separately- called every day from Germany. My Father wanted me to support 'our national team' - the German team. My Mother wanted me to support 'her national team' - the Korean team. In the end, on match-day, I had decided to stay neutral. But in a pub filled with Germans¹, who had come to watch the game, the only two Korea-supporters sat down beside me.

When the game was over, the Germans celebrated and the Koreans were disappointed. The game dashed South- Korea's hopes of becoming football world champion. My Mother was disappointed, my Father gloated, and I? I was the only person in the pub who had both won and lost! I suffered the gloating from my German friends, and the cross looks from the present Koreans when I toasted the German victory. Since then, I make it my business to be fully disinterested in football, but during the celebrations afterwards my German friends asked me how my parents had met. Germany and South Korea seemed worlds apart.

My mother-like most other Korean women in present-day Germany- was one of the many nurses that came to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or 'Germany' henceforth) in the late sixties and early seventies. The by far largest number of labour migrants to Germany came from Turkey, totalling 27% of all *Gastarbeiter* [guest-workers] in the FRG in 1975 (Rist, 1978:66) and numbering more than a million. The comparatively small number of Koreans migrating to Germany began their influx in 1970 after a bilateral agreement between South Korea (Korea henceforth) and the FRG

¹ 'Germans' and 'German' here and throughout, refers to members of the Caucasian majority society.

(Booth, 1992:110). The agreement intended to recruit men for work in the mining area and women as hospital staff. Roughly 10,000 women and 8000 men migrated from Korea to Germany (cf Han, 1991, Yoo, 1991, Beckers-Kim, 2005; Hyung, 2008). Today it is estimated that roughly 32.000 Koreans are living in Germany, thus constituting the largest Korean minority in Europe.

“They live(d) their lives silently [*lautlos*],” Young-Ja Beckers-Kim (Beckers-Kim 2008:13) writes about the Korean migrants to Germany. The word *lautlos* means ‘quiet’ or ‘noiseless’, indicating that someone or something doesn’t draw attention to themselves or itself. Referring to the first generation of Korean migrants, it means that they lived away from the spotlight and never tried seeking attention. “After some time, they [the Korean migrants] decided to stay, and from then on called their host country their *Wahlheimat* [chosen home/homeland]” (2008:13).

People- especially in Germany- tend to be surprised hearing about the Korean community. Everyone in Germany has encountered Turkish migrants, and may be aware of Italian or Greek migrants, all of whom migrated during the ‘Economic Miracle’ after WW2, but the history of Korean migration to Germany did not seem to have entered the broad public consciousness. In official statistics on migrants the Korean community vanishes under the heading ‘other’. In debates about integration in Germany, public attention, the media and politicians focus on the Turkish minority. And in moral panics about crime rates amongst young people with migrant parents, young people with an Asian background are explicitly excluded in newspaper reports². Phenotypical appearance makes the Korean community visible within the majority society, but lacking the numbers of other migrant groups, and being wholly ‘unproblematic’, the Korean community continues living quietly in Germany.

The second generation is educated and middle class. In the course of time large numbers have become naturalized German citizens, and they live and work in Germany. The second generation does not make the news, as the Turkish second generation does. There are no public debates about integrating the second generation of German Koreans into the majority society. While this may have a lot to do with their numbers, they also appear, on the whole, ‘unproblematic’ for the majority society. So unproblematic that the Korean-German Network (KGN) - an organization of Koreans in Germany- once

² Cf Die Zeit (25.03.2009 online edition).

claimed that the Korean community in Germany is the best integrated migrant community, and that the second generation is fully integrated.

My research stemmed from simple curiosity at first. How, if the newspapers were constantly filled with articles about integration and the problems of second generation migrants in Germany, was it possible that the Korean second generation had integrated so successfully? Considering the constant German debates about integration and the Turkish second generation, I wanted to find out what had gone so differently for the Korean second generation. One of the key motifs in debates about integration seemed to be the perceived unwillingness of second generation Turkish migrants to integrate and take on a German identity.

The question of identity seemed to lie at the heart of integration debates about second generations. And the debates about identity invariably seemed to use the treatment of women to draw boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Below, I will outline some of the discourses on identity and gender in Germany, and the theoretical approaches I have chosen to explore the negotiation of identity amongst second generation German Korean women. Beginning with past approaches to the question of second generation migrant identities in Germany, and the mobilization of gender to draw boundaries, I posit that such discourses and approaches are too limiting to gain a full understanding of the complex processes of identity negotiation. However, looking at these discourses and approaches helps identifying the areas that they cannot sufficiently explain, thus providing points of departure.

According to Ang (2003) identity is the basis for social order. There are other bases and different theories for social order, but the relatively modern concept of identity as a key concept of social order is at the focus of many recent theories. Much has been published about the concept of identity (for example: Giddens, 1991; Hall, 1992; Sarup, 1996; Jenkins, 1996). The term ‘identity’ has proved a powerful tool in exploring diverse social transformations across political, economic, gendered, ethnic etc, spheres. For many theorists, national identity -as opposed to other identities- enjoys a privileged position, compared to other identities. The idea that national identity is based on a people’s “essence” and therefore remains basically unchangeable is bound up with political connotations that give it a privileged status. One can argue the same for other identities, such as ‘gay’ or ‘queer’ identities, which can be and sometimes are highly

politicized and connected to high emotional properties, but few other identities have been so formalized and institutionalized as national identity. Today's political world system is based upon nations- the nation amongst nations as a spatially finite category, each defined in the first place by a set of clear-cut and internationally recognised borders (Smith, 1998:95). National state officials define national identity by opposing it to "the other", among other things, through the introduction of ID cards and passports. This separates the national from the alien, stressing the rights and obligations of the individual national. It creates a boundary between them and those that do not share those rights and obligations, but also stressing the ethnic unity of the nation and a shared belief in "blood-relatedness" (Jager, 2003).

Existing past approaches in Germany, tended to construct the second generation of migrant children as victims of an inevitable culture conflict that would lead to an identity crisis. According to Polat (1997), in German academia much has been written about conflicting cultures and value systems that migrant children need to negotiate, leading to inevitable identity crises, especially amongst the children. As the first generation of guest-workers raised families, the question of identity for the children became of interest. Polat (1997) summarizes that 'identity-crisis', 'identity-diffusion' and 'identity-confusion' were the central topic in research dealing with the identity of migrant children (1997:35). Having an identity crisis is considered an inevitable fact amongst migrant children, who are "stranded between two cultures, in conflict with their parents, facing the difficulty of negotiating two incommensurable value systems" (Parker, 1995:12).

In a similar vein, authors like Heitmeyer (1997), regard identities as bounded and separate, thus mutually exclusive. Using such approaches, he has concluded that the second generation of Turkish migrant children resist integration into the German majority society. Rather than Turkish youths having an 'identity crisis', he portrays them as given the choice between two conflicting identities. In his work, he argues that Turkish migrant children are content living with Islam and Turkishness, and therefore had no interest to integrate, and actively resisted. Such approaches are limiting for understanding the complexities of identity. Using such an approach to analyze identity, conclusions such as Heitmeyer's (1997) seem logical, since one must choose between two mutually exclusive identities. An identity crisis is the only logical outcome.

In conjunction with renewed debates on integration and identity, gender came into focus again in Germany, particularly with regards to migrant populations. ‘Identity politics’ tend to harden ethnic³ and gender boundaries, and homogenize and naturalize categories and group differences (Yuval-Davis, 1997:119). Notions of what it means to be female influence notions of masculinity, and in this context, ideas about women and the treatment of women highlight the project of creating boundaries that impact on the discourse on German national identity: “The oppression of women within Islamic culture exacerbates the social problems of the Muslim minority [in Germany] that refuses *its* women education almost everywhere and denies them personal self-fulfilment.” Jürgen Krönig writes in *Die Zeit* [46/2005]. In other words: As long as ‘they’ treat ‘their’ women badly, ‘they’ cannot become ‘us’.

In public discourse, the idea of the emancipated German woman, fully equal with men, having all citizen’s rights and economic independence, symbolizes social progress. Compared to that, the ‘oppression’ and ‘victimization’ of migrant women is used as evidence for the chasm separating guest-workers and Germans. Chin (2007) writes: “The treatment of women [...] became the primary litmus test to determine whether foreigners- and especially Turks- possessed the capacity to function effectively within a Western liberal democratic society” (2007:143).

Gender has not been absent from academic literature about migrants in Germany, but has been discussed since the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to Chin (2007), the emphasis on women in this literature developed out of a progressive impulse to move beyond the caricature of the male guest-worker that dominated German public imagination in the era of labour recruitment. The new focus was part of a bid towards recognizing migrants and their families as de facto immigrants, and to understand the complexities of guest-workers’ lives (2007:162).

However, the initial attempt to understand complexities shifted away from highly nuanced efforts at cultural understanding to a recurring trope of the imprisoned, imperilled Turkish woman (2007:162). In recent academic texts the focus has shifted again. While some writers (such as Özkara, 1990; Lajios, 1991; Nieke, 1991;

³ ‘Ethnic’ and ‘ethnicity’ are complex terms, often used interchangeably with ‘national’ or ‘cultural’, where they seem to “describe a ‘racial’ grouping” (Smith, 1998:45). I use ‘ethnicity’ in Smith’s (1998) sense as descriptive of “a unity [...] based on the powerful myth of a presumed common ancestry and shared historical memories” (1998:46).

Heitmeyer, 1997) have argued the oppressiveness of traditional Turkish family structures for women that negatively influence their children, others have attempted more nuanced understandings. Opitz (1986) explored the lives of Afro-German women, arguing against an image of ‘orientalised’ womanhood and racial prejudices. Atabay (1998) has taken an ethnographic approach for understanding the gender relations amongst second generation Turkish migrants, showing the complex understandings of gender by both sexes, and the possibilities for positioning oneself. Piper (2003) looked at Thai migrant brides and sex workers in Germany, and their understanding of gender and gender relations. Mandel (2008) discusses Turkish women and headscarves, and the representation of Turkish women, and how head-scarves are used as a means of resistance to outward (German) pressure and expectations of ‘what a Turkish woman should look like.’

Comparing the dates of writing, it appears that both tendencies coexisted and continue to coexist. If I claim that there is a shift, I argue that it has come from an ethnographic understanding that in my estimation has begun to permeate other areas. It remains to be seen whether or not this trend continues. Journalistic approaches, however, are still looking for sensational head-lines that are by and large not concerned with presenting a more nuanced picture. Recently there has been a surge in stories about ‘honour-killings’, in which family members- usually of Turkish origin- kill a young woman for some misdemeanour, like ‘wanting a western lifestyle’. Representations of guest-workers in the media have focussed on the Turkish minority and representations of Turkish women as constantly oppressed, and subject to discrimination, while casting Turkish men as patriarchal and inherently oppressive. The ongoing head-scarf debate in Germany highlights the complexities of gender, national identity and integration. In Germany, women and girls with their heads covered often encounter negative reactions; attempts have been made to prevent them from wearing scarves (Mandel, 2008:304). Some German school teachers have prohibited girls from wearing scarves in the classroom. The head-scarf has become a symbol of the continued “domination of the man over the woman, a practice with continues to be observed in Turkey” (Chin, 2007:175).

Approaching the question of gender from the current predominant perspective is unhelpful. Migrants are conflated with ‘Turks’, migrant men are all ‘oppressive and

patriarchal', and migrant women are all 'oppressed and victimized'. Such assumptions of essential cultural differences drive a wedge between foreign and German women, and foreign and German men. What these debates about gender and migration do is to create a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them', ascribing identities that are mutually exclusive and a discourse about assimilation, rather than integration.

The second generation of Korean migrants in Germany does not fit easily into these discourses. On the surface German and Korean identity seem mutually exclusive. The Korean nation is constituted in a narrative centring upon blood and soil (Kim, 1997). Similarly, the German nation, until the year 2000 operated under a strict form of the *jus sanguinis* for naturalization. These two approaches, which both centre on a narrative of blood-relatedness, create a difficult position for the second generation of Korean migrants to Germany. According to the Korean narrative, they are Korean. According to the German narrative, they are Korean too. They do not fit into a German national narrative, but they live their lives in Germany and large numbers are naturalized German citizens. They fit into the Korean national narrative, but they are German citizens and their everyday lives are in Germany.

"We're not Koreans, we're not Germans- we're *kyopos*," many of my informants used to say to explain to me how they identified and who they were. *Kyopo* is a Korean word, meaning 'Korean living in a foreign country'. In that sense the word is used in Korea, and overseas. The second generation of South-Koreans ('Koreans' henceforth) in Germany uses it to describe itself, meaning specifically 'second-generation German-Korean in Germany'. The first generation goes by various names, depending on the context. Often members of the first generation refer to themselves as *Koreaner* [Koreans] exclusively, and distinguish the first from the second generation. Others use hyphenated names, comparable to 'Asian-American', like *Deutschkoreaner* [German-Korean], which indicate the specific situation, distinguishing them from what is variously known as 'real Koreans', or 'Korean Koreans' or 'the Koreans in South Korea', all of which refer to South-Koreans exclusively and not to North-Koreans. Amongst the second generation the use of *Deutschkoreaner* is much more wide-spread, but during my fieldwork in Frankfurt am Main, my informants preferred the term *kyopo*. In the German discourse on integration, such a hybrid identity appears an anomaly at best, the sign of an identity crisis at worst.

In this study, I used national identity and notions about essentialized identity as points of departure. The construction of national identity both in Korea and Germany can shed light upon the difficulties migrants encounter in their host societies, but to understand *kyopo* identity in everyday life, the rigid constructions of German or Korean identity are too limited. The German state has recently tried to emphasise civic citizenship focussing upon the legal aspects i.e.: a citizen's rights and duties as an individual as defined in 'territorial nations' (Smith, 1986), thus moving away from the idea of national citizenship by blood, and de-essentializing German identity. Soysal (1994) argues for such a post-national citizenship, as does Brubaker (1992), suggesting post-national citizenship based upon dual membership: that is, membership in one nation and membership in another state in which one is a resident. While such theories imply a solution to ongoing debates about second generation identities, I argue that such compartmentalizing is essentialist in conception too, and contains a "unitary notion of culture, constructed through closed and originary forms of narrative" (Parker, 1995:37). Divorcing civic citizenship from cultural identity only serves to highlight the complexities of identity. So, I used these fixed identities as a point of departure to explore the tension between "recognizing the subject as decentred and culture as hybrid, and acknowledging the political exigencies of constructing and affirming collective identity" (Parry, 1992:30). From that position, German and Korean identities begin with a fixed set of attributes, thereby situating German-Koreans in a theoretical space 'in between' conflicting cultures. However, in the course of my research, "the multiplicity of identities, which simultaneously inhabited different material and symbolic spaces, negotiated different languages and did not sustain themselves by idealizing pure and untainted pasts" (Parker, 1995:35), demonstrated the limits of essentialized identities.

The focus on identity in my research allows me to stress how individuals' identity is shaped through shared points of commonality that are grounded in everyday life. Many social theorists have argued for a 'soft' understanding of identity, stressing the importance of narrative to social life and a constructivist approach to identity. Identity becomes a flexible and capacious concept, subject to open-ended negotiation. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that the social sciences have surrendered to such soft and flexible approaches to identity, and that the word has come to mean either too much, too little, or nothing at all. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that the constructivist stance on identity, to soften and to acquit it of the charge of "essentialism", stipulating that

identities are malleable, fluid and multiple, leaves no reason to talk about identities. Instead, they suggest using less ambiguous terms, like identification. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) question how, if it is fluid, it can harden, congeal and crystallize; or, if constructed, how one can understand the sometimes coercive force of external identifications. (2000:01). Rightly, they assert that “identity” is a key term in the vernacular idiom of contemporary politics, and claim that “conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of ‘identity’, saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary” (2000:02).

While I agree that encompassing all of the above in the idiom of “identity” may seem blunt and undifferentiated, regarding identity as a category of practice has its place in the social sciences, precisely because it is “the vernacular idiom of contemporary politics”. Identities, to paraphrase Claude Lévi-Strauss, are good to think with, because we use “identity” and different “identities” as categories to organize the world around us, and depending on the circumstances, prioritize one form of identity, over another. Because the concept of essentialized identity is so central to debates about integration in Germany, I posit that employing the concept, and exploring it as a practice, sheds light onto the complexities of human interaction, self-understanding and underlying societal and ideological structures. I argue that identity is a relational category of practice, which is continually renegotiated, or as Parker (1995: 173) put it: “Identities are formed in two ways; as narratives of self-production, and through defences against unwelcome attributions made by others”. This formation, as an ongoing process, synthesizes “internal self-definition and one’s ascription by others” (Jenkins, 1996:20). Identities are always linked to the context in which they are lived and therefore are dynamic in formation, meaning that they are grounded in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge (Edensor, 2002:17).

Like Hall (1989) I consider identity to “always [be] constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence, but a positioning” (1989:71). This ‘positioning’ is done in different ways and on different levels, not only individually, but serving as a basis for creating community, or dividing it. And if identities are indeed ‘good to think with’, then exploring the process of positioning, the

narratives of self-production and the ascriptions by others, show the limits and possibilities of the social order Ang (2003) claims identities are the basis of, and how to challenge it. In this study I attempted a more holistic approach, by also exploring social interactions and habits, as a way of articulating the possibilities of identity, and its limits.

I focus on women, since gender relations are used as a way of determining whether or not a migrant group can 'become' German, but: "in any consideration of gender, too exclusive a focus on either sex can itself be misleading" (Cowan, 1990:07). Gender is a relational reality, making it impossible to study exclusively male or female worlds. As Flax emphasised, "As a practical social relation, gender can be understood only by a close examination of the meanings of 'male' and 'female' and the consequences of being assigned to one or the other gender within concrete social practices" (Flax (1987) in Cowan, 1990:8).

Gender, like identity, is an organizing principle that exists on two levels: it is a relational concept that determines everyday social practices and activities, and a thought construct or category that helps making sense of particular social worlds and histories (Flax, 1987:630). As a relational concept gender never is and never can be as monolithic as the above German representations have cast it. A more nuanced understanding of gender is needed in analysis to move away from the recurring trope that pitches a seemingly inherent non-German identity against another by using gender. I am not advocating returning to the well-intended German example of the early 1980s, which sought to understand migrants and their families via looking at women. Such an approach divides migrants into male migrants and 'their' women and families. While this approach has yielded results that are at odds with the current representations- showing much more complexity than the current representations- approaching gender as a relational concept is much more helpful. One cannot study gender in isolation, so looking at German-Korean second generation women always entailed looking at German-Korean men; as well as the men and women of the majority society, to gain a deeper understanding of everyday social practices and activities, and their ways of negotiating identity.

In chapter 2, I set the scene of these social practices and activities, explaining my methodology and limitations. I undertook my fieldwork in Frankfurt am Main, which is

home to a large Korean community. I introduce myself, the city, and explain how I arrived and met my informants. Some of my personal background is important to explain my methodology and limitations.

Chapter 3 provides a brief history of migration to Germany, theoretical background on the construction of 'Germanness', gender, integration and discusses existing literature on migrant second generations in Germany. Identities are not independent actors, but my discussion concerns the identities of people, who live in a certain environment that informs them, and the ways in which they negotiate identities. Thus, a complete understanding of identity requires an analysis of historical circumstances that inform the present day. To contextualise the present day situation of the second generation of Korean descent in Germany, I explore an understanding of 'Germanness', the history of migration to Germany, and policies and efforts at integration, with particular focus on second generations.

I ask: what impact, do the discourses on Germanness and gender have on the situation of second generations? What does 'integration' mean in Germany? What are the aims of integration? How does the media and literature conceptualize second generations? What discourse is employed to talk about second generations? How are the *kyopos* situated in those discourses?

In chapter 4, I discuss the particularities of Korean migration to Germany. Identities have to be situated historically, so I look at the particular circumstances of South Korea at the time of their migration, focussing on the construction of gender and identity in Korea. Then I discuss first generation Korean women's experiences in Germany and the present-day situation. I ask: what were the specific historic circumstances of Korean migration? What experiences did the women make? Has the experience of gendered migration put the Korean migrants to Germany into a unique position?

Chapter 5 builds on chapter 4, exploring cultural legacies and change that inform the self-understanding of the second-generation. I discuss pre-migration cultural influences, focussing on family experiences, norms and cultural frameworks. I explore traditional Korean family structures and the role of women within the family. Then I look at family patterns of Korean migrants to Germany and ask: Have they changed? And if so, how? How have these experiences shaped and influenced the self-understanding of the second

generation, especially women? What impact do visits to Korea have? How do they position themselves, in relation to their Korean parents, their German everyday environment and Korea?

Chapter 7 explores integration and the limitations of *kyopo* identity. The German discourse on integration, in which identity and self-identification are seemingly at the heart of successful integration, seems inclusive. But is it open to all foreigners to integrate successfully? What does it mean for the *kyopos*? How do they situate themselves within the larger debate? How do the *kyopo* women see themselves?

In chapter 8, I look at ways of performing *kyopo* identity. Having explained the discourses surrounding identity negotiation, I show how this is done in a particular space- the karaoke bar- where identity is enacted as a narrative of self-production. I ask how this is done through performance. How is continuity and discontinuity with the parental 'Koreanness' expressed and performed? What impact does the everyday German environment have? What role does gender play? What are the possibilities and limitations of *kyopo* identity for young women?

German debates on integration of migrant second generations still focus on ideas of culture conflicts and identity crises. Drawing together all these issues in the conclusion, it is possible to see how *kyopos* negotiate identity as an opportunity that rejects the static and monolithic constructions of essentialized Germanness and essentialized Koreanness. The *kyopos* narrate and negotiate their identity within those discourses, drawing on static concepts, but situate themselves as neither/nor and instead conceptualize their identity as a hybrid identity based on shared experiences. However, there are limits to how they can construct their identities, and these limits apply particularly to women.

2. ‘Going home to study myself’: Frankfurt am Main and the Kyopos.

In the introduction, I gave a brief insight into the history of migration and present-day issues surrounding migrants in Germany. Here, I intend to explain the geographical, demographical and methodological circumstances of my fieldwork, as well as introducing my key informants that reappear in the following chapters. To put all of this into context, I will first provide some background information on myself, as using myself as a lens will help towards an understanding of the community and the research as a whole. Then, I will briefly explain my larger, geographical fieldsite and how it presents itself, and the actual, social fieldsite. I will then explain my methodology and the limitations I encountered, how I set about making contacts, and situated myself amongst my informants, and finally introduce some key informants.

2.1. ‘Going home to a foreign country’- An insider ethnography?

The anthropologist’s past is relevant [only] in so far as it relates to the anthropological enterprise, which includes the choice of area and study, the experience of fieldwork, analysis and writing (Okely, 1992:01). Thus, it is vital to reflect upon the anthropologist’s self in order to contextualise that research. Not only is personal history relevant to explain an initial interest, but it is also necessary in order to comprehend the manner in which I, as the fieldworker, was received and re-contextualised. Hastrup (1992) points out that the field is not “the unmediated world of the ‘others’, but the world between ourselves and the others”, thus the encounters within the field as part of a wider discourse depend very intimately upon the person of the fieldworker. All ethnographers are after all positioned subjects (Rosaldo, 1984:192), their position being defined by certain factors, such as age, gender, outsider status, lived experience and so on. Fieldwork is intersubjective, making it pivotal to gain an understanding of the ‘unnamed fieldworker’, who to the ‘unnamed informants’, after all, is as real a person as one to the other.

An explanation of the researcher’s past and position will be helpful in understanding the issue of access. ‘Othering’ is part of the anthropological practice; however, the identity of others is relational (Hastrup, 1992:121), depending very much on the fieldworker

herself, her mode of access and her positionality in the field as well as the way she is perceived. With an insider ethnography, in particular, certain issues arise: for one, insiders can never be expected to be 'objective and scientific' and for another, the process of studying an alien culture is missing. Influenced by the relationship with one's own group, the anthropologist apparently cannot distance herself from her group and yet has already done so by choosing to study it (Hovland, 2003:01). Therefore it is crucial, from the very start, to establish the researcher within the field to comprehend the methods used to gain access and gather data, as well as the subsequent analysis of findings. 'Fieldwork and analysis constitute a unified praxis' (Scholte, 1974:438) intricately interwoven with the person of the fieldworker herself, whose position in the field provides the necessary premise to the analysis.

My research was intended to be an 'insider ethnography': the study of one's own group, which seems to go against anthropological reason. It appears that when the anthropologist goes home to do fieldwork, it becomes difficult to separate the difference of the world out there, the field, from the normality of home. The assumption therefore could be made that an 'inside ethnographer' will never be able to conform to the principles of the rite of passage that fieldwork is, as the insider can never be expected to be 'objective and scientific', and the process of studying an alien culture is missing (cf, Abu-Lughod, 1991; Hastrup, 1991 etc). With the intention of studying second-generation Korean women in Germany, the endeavour of an 'insider ethnography' appeared clear-cut. I expected an insider ethnography and, within a short period of time, found myself an outsider and a foreigner in a country whose language is my mother tongue. Having spent several years living and studying in the UK, I found that I was missing a vast knowledge of everyday references, not only startling me, but those around me. My flatmate's girlfriend, herself an exchange student from Latin America, spent the first two weeks helping me out. The '*Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität*' also had a project involved in greeting foreign students helping them to get acclimatized to their new surroundings. I obtained a very kindly mentor whose help proved invaluable to me in dealing with the puzzling ways of everyday life.

Thus, while in some respects my research did involve returning 'home', it is important to grasp that the concept of an 'insider ethnography' as I expected one, must be used with caution. My definition of self, my own experiences and my expectations did not

firmly position me either as ‘the other’ or ‘the insider’, but in between different concepts and perceptions that I will discuss in more detail later in the context of meeting informants. With an interest fuelled after lengthy periods of rejection and alienation by a clash of perceptions, leading me from England back to Germany into an area of contested identity, positioned me awkwardly as the ‘other’ insider on several levels for Germans, German-Koreans and myself.

2.2. Frankfurt am Main- The fieldsite

I chose Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt henceforth), as a viable site for research. It currently hosts the largest part of the Korean migrants, numbering approximately 5000 people. The city is better known for being a centre of international trade, housing the German Stock Market and a renowned international book fair, being a financial centre as well as being famous for being the hometown of *Johann-Wolfgang von Goethe*, one of the most famous German poets, for whom the university is named.

Frankfurt is a popular destination for tourists. Its *Altstadt* [Old Town] was mostly destroyed by Allied bombing in WW2, but a few famous medieval structures remain that are popular with tourists. After the war, Frankfurt missed out on becoming the new capital to Bonn, but having been an important centre for trade and finances since the Middle Ages, it retained its important position in German trade and industry. International trade fairs have been held since the Middle Ages in the city, and other than being a tourist attraction, the city is now a leading centre of trade. The city is also home to the European Central Bank, and serves as a hub for traffic on rail, road and by plane. Since Germany’s largest airport is close by, the old town is usually rather crowded with tourists, especially in summer.

While it sounds busy and crowded, Frankfurt itself has a population⁴ of 660 289 inhabitants of which 169 539 are *Ausländer* [literally: outlanders/foreigners]. With 31 690 i.e.: 19.1%, Turkish nationals are the largest foreign minority in Frankfurt, followed closely by Serbian and Croatian nationals⁵. On its website, Frankfurt welcomes visitors

⁴ http://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/media.php/1977/37_Einwohner2005Quartal3.pdf

⁵ http://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/media.php/1977/37_Einwohner2005Quartal3.pdf

as ‘the most international city in Germany’⁶. The city prides itself on being cosmopolitan, advertising by calling itself a ‘global village’⁷, claiming internationality as a ‘*Leitmotif*’ and priding itself further on the peaceful *nebeneinander* [side by side] of over a hundred nationalities per square kilometre. A very glitzy new skyline of skyscrapers contrasts with half-timbered houses, and sushi-bars can be found alongside restaurants serving traditional local specialities. German *Gemütlichkeit* [cosiness] coexists in harmony with the buzz of international life⁸. Away from the main pedestrian precinct, the *Zeil* and the *Altstadt*, Frankfurt is very cosy. It has a provincial feel of slowness to it, and away from the main traffic arteries, one can find street cafés, beer gardens and sleepy little restaurants. The nightlife is distributed over the entire city rather than one location. The city claims that it combines the old with the new and different cultures living peacefully *side by side* or next to one another, as well as being a friendly tourist destination. I highlight this again to explain that Frankfurt as presented towards the outside world by various authorities and tourist agencies, attempts to show itself as very open and friendly towards others, but at the same time indicates that outsiders are expected to live peacefully next to native Frankfurters, not in their midst. Added to that is the tourist population that comes and goes, and particularly in popular places leads to interactions in which anyone looking different is automatically assumed to be a tourist, hence incapable of speaking German. In later chapters I will show that this constant ‘othering’ plays a large role towards understanding the German-Korean self-understanding, so it should be noted here already.

Rents in Frankfurt are comparatively high, and the cheapest quarter to live in, is the *Gallusviertel*, which traditionally is an immigrant quarter. Many students choose to live there precisely because the rents are cheap. I learned this while I was looking for a flatshare, slowly building up a knowledge of Frankfurt, and the different conceptualizations of the city’s areas. While looking for a flat, I had my first suspicions that I might not actually do an ‘insider ethnography’. “Making the exotic familiar and the familiar strange” (Okely, 1996:05) as an anthropological endeavour, something that the anthropologist does, didn’t happen. Instead, I was the one feeling out of place and not ‘at home’ at all.

⁶ <http://www.frankfurt.de/sis/Stadtporrait.php>
http://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=stadtfrankfurt_eval01.c.317693.en

⁷ <http://www.frankfurt.de/sis/Stadtporrait.php>

⁸ <http://www.frankfurt.de/sis/Stadtporrait.php>

My eventual location also had the benefit to be closely situated to the *Korea Haus* [Korea House]. The *Korea Haus* would play an important part in my research, so it was providential that I found a place close by. During the time of my fieldwork, the *Korea Haus* was a restaurant with a small karaoke-bar attached, and mainly stood out as high-rise building that had the words *Korea Haus* in neon lights on the side. It did not stand out particularly from other buildings facing the main train station, all of which sported similar neon lighting and advertisements, mainly for airlines. Unobtrusive and unnoticed in general, the building was reminiscent of what Beckers-Kim (2008) writes about when describing the German-Korean migrants as living their lives quietly.

The practicalities of arriving and establishing oneself bodily, are coupled with the practicalities of arriving and establishing oneself within the fieldsite as a research space. Establishing myself within Frankfurt only increased the sense that I had gained while flat-hunting that I might not find myself doing a ‘straightforward’ insider-ethnography. This sneaking suspicion made me contact the University of Frankfurt’s international students’ welcome project, designed to provide foreign students with mentors to help them get acclimatized. The project organizers were somewhat puzzled by my request, but immediately helpful and my mentor proved to be a great help, later also in establishing contacts with the German-Korean population.

While in some respects my research did involve returning ‘home’, it is important to grasp that the concept of an ‘insider ethnography’, as I expected one, must be used with caution as my definition of self, my own experiences and my expectations did not firmly position me either as ‘the other’ or ‘the insider’, but in between different concepts and perceptions. My German flatmates considered me ‘the other’, because of habits I had picked up in the UK that struck them as foreign. The German-Koreans saw me in the same way as my flatmates, and- since I had grown up isolated from the Korean community in Germany- didn’t see me as one of them. Thus my own struggles with positioning myself on several levels, finding my own identity questioned and myself categorized, determined the methods I used in gaining data. This experience is familiar both to anthropologists who return ‘home’ to carry out fieldwork and among migrants, who are never really ‘at home’, whether in the host country or when they ‘return’.

2.3. Meeting the German-Korean minority in Frankfurt- Demographics, Limits, Research Questions, Methodology and Ethics

In this section, I discuss my sample of informants and the limits of said sample. I will then outline the research questions I formulated, and explain my methodology and ethics, before making some general observations about my community, and introducing some of my informants.

Demographics and Limits

I spoke with 63 male and female informants in formal interviews, ages ranging from 17 to 65. Of the total number, twenty informants never did a second interview. Below is a break-down according to gender, number of informants, age, class and education.

Age	Gender	Generation	Parentage	Occupation	Class	Numbers
17-19	Female	Second	Korean	Still attending school	Middle Class	11
19-32	Female	Second	Korean (one exception)	Attending university/white collar work with finished degree (one exception)	Middle Class	32
60-65	Female	First	Korean	Retired/nursing/white collar work	Middle Class	6
20-33	Male	Second	Korean (one)	Attending university/white	Middle Class	14

			exception)	collar work with finished degree		
N/A	Male	First	Korean	N/A	N/A	N/A

A further 34 informants are not included for lack of formal interviews. All of these informants fall into the age bracket 20-32 (21 females, 13 males), were either studying or had finished a university degree, and were middle class. These informal informants I met repeatedly over the course of my fieldwork, at various parties and other gatherings. As acquaintances, we would chat, but for assorted reasons, mostly due to time-constraints or conflicting schedules, never set up a formal interview. One of the obvious shortcomings of this sample is the lack of first generation male voices, and the thin sample of first generation female voices. At the time of my fieldwork, I focussed on the second generation and women, so failed to take male first-generation voices into account formally. The number of first generation females is limited for the same reasons.

The seemingly odd distribution of ages deserves a quick explanation: Due to the migration pattern and the comparatively short window of migration to Germany, the first generation were all roughly the same age, and began families in a relatively narrow window of time. There is a sharp delineation between the first and second generation. Because of this narrow window of time, in which the second generation was born, the younger age bracket is quite small.

For the first generation, the above sample does not accurately reflect occupation. While the number of nurses is high, interviews and personal conversations revealed that the range of occupations among first generation women is greater than indicated in my sample. The reflection of age, occupation and class for the second generation, both male and female, however is correct, and representative for the whole second generation of German-Koreans. According to Beckers-Kim (2005), 95% of second generation German-Koreans have achieved the *Abitur*. Thus, my sample accurately reflects the overall academic achievements, and the social mobility of the second generation.

One striking absence in the above sample requires some explanation. I only had two informants who had a German parent as well as a Korean parent. Being of German/Korean⁹ heritage myself, and the perception my informants had of me initially, lies at the root of this shortcoming. Realizing how my informants saw me, initially, made me abandon such plans as attending Korean lessons in order to evade an impression that I was searching for my roots; indeed, I quite often positioned myself as ‘entirely German’ in thinking and acting. At the same time, being a ‘half and half’ provided me with a privileged position in gaining access since it was expected of me to be ‘drawn to Korean culture’, giving me the opportunity to oscillate between the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ position. In other words, my mere presence highlighted an ongoing discourse. It is a truism that you know about yourself via the way others see you. In the same vein you learn about others via the way they see you. My Korean connection provided me with a source of access, while at the same time my ‘half and half’ status kept me in a position of liminality to a certain degree, allowing me to examine notions of Koreanness and Germanness.

Abu-Lughod (1991) sums up the dilemma of the “halfie anthropologists” as: “[When] they position themselves with reference to two communities, [...] when they present the Other they are presenting themselves(1991:469).” Parker (1995), a half Chinese, half British researcher, studying the processes of identity negotiation amongst young Chinese people in the UK, had similar experiences. He claims that a “commonality of experience was implicit throughout the discussions “(1995:244). He goes on to say that shifting his positionalities was a feature of his discussions to elicit responses. He quotes one of his informants saying about him:

“By having a dual/multiple identity you were both easy to relate to and yet sufficiently distanced. Had you been white there may have been resistance, and had you been Chinese there may have been reluctance to be fully critical. Your uniqueness and position both insider and outsider makes you an ideal interviewer” (1995:245).

While I would not call myself, an ‘ideal interviewer’, my informants’ perception of me provided opportunities. It brought out issues of what it means to be German or Korean, problematizing integration. One of my informants said that as a ‘half-Korean’ “you are exotic enough to attract attention, but not too outlandish”, implying once more that

⁹ Henceforth German/Korean denotes having one German and one Korean parent, unless otherwise stated.

‘half-Koreans’ have it easier integrating. In my fieldwork my being perceived as ‘half and half’, with all the attached stereotypes about what it is to be a ‘half-Korean’, served as an initial point for discussion in constructing *kyopo* identity.

I expected to meet second-generation German-Koreans like myself, however, thinking that we would have much in common. In the beginning of my fieldwork, I fully intended to look at second generation German-Koreans who had two ethnically different parents and those that had two Korean parents. I soon changed to focussing on second-generation German-Koreans with two Korean parents, once I had gained access to the community. At the time, there were few persons active within the community who had one German and one Korean parent. Proportionally, the vast majority had two Korean parents or were *Ganzkoreaner* [Full Koreans], and very few who were *Halbkoreaner*. But therein lies one of the limitations of this study: all my main informants and most of those active within the community that I met have two Korean parents. That ignores a large number of *Halbkoreaner*, who are not represented in this study.

Research Questions

Below, I outline my research questions that I set out to answer. They provided the framework for this study, beginning with an undifferentiated understanding of identity, which, in the course of my research, changed towards a dynamic understanding of identity formation and negotiation. My research questions were as follows:

- Can the ideal of ‘civic citizenship’ or post-national citizenship actually bridge the discrepancies between popular discourses of belonging? Is the rise of the European Union and its laws upon migration and stress on civic rights a defining moment for the demise of the importance of national identity or do national sentiments linger and provide obstacles for the integration of migrants? Can ethnic boundaries become permeable by employing a civic and territorial discourse as suggested by Brubaker (1992)?
- In light of this, is it a useful concept that will provide the children of migrants with a distinct identity allowing identification with a state (rather than a nation) or does the underlying construction of ‘Germanness’ as well as the construction of ‘Koreanness’ inhibit a form of civic identity for German-Koreans, and other mixed-background

persons ? And thus, is ‘civic citizenship’ merely a concept used to brush over the discrepancies?

- How do second generation women position themselves in relation to their parents, their community and the majority culture? How does the construction of gendered national identity influence their self-understanding? What impact have changing kinship patterns and traditional values had upon the process of self-understanding both for the first and second generation women? How is the discrepancy between different experiences and processes of socialisation reconciled and consolidated? How far are obvious differences in looks playing a conscious role in the determination of difference? What and how does this influence every-day lives?
- Do second generation women actually ‘have to make a choice’ between seemingly conflicting and devaluing concepts of identity or can they reconcile their own understanding of themselves in a hybrid identity as hinted at by usage of the term ‘Reiskartoffel’, making allowances to both discourses? And is the second generation a fully accepted part of German society, as KGN [Korean-German Network] states? What impact does naturalisation have, if any at all?

Access

In this section, I will provide a brief overview over the opportunities for access to the community, and how I went about making contacts. Then I will discuss the questions I asked, and discuss how these were operationalized for interviews and observations.

As Gupta & Ferguson (1997) point out: “One does not just wander onto a ‘field site’ to engage in a deep and meaningful relationship with ‘the natives’. The ‘Field’ is a clearing whose deceptive transparency obscures the complex processes that go into constructing it”(1997:5). Multi-sited fieldwork is no longer a novelty in anthropology. The discipline has moved away from ideas about ‘the field’ as a bounded place in the classical Malinowskian image of fieldwork (1997:11), towards an approach that decentres ‘the field’ and then “recovering it as one element in a multistranded methodology for the construction of [...] ‘situated knowledges’” (1997:37). In essence, for me, the dispersed community in Frankfurt made me “focus on shifting locations rather than bounded fields” (1997:38) and seek locations for meeting.

Amongst the organized spaces are churches. There are different evangelical churches catering to the German-Korean population, holding services in Korean, and one Catholic congregation. The fragmented nature of the evangelical churches, and the competition for new converts from those churches made it inopportune for me to participate in religious life. But as it turned out, many of my informants knew one another from attending church together as children, but had long stopped attending services.

Another publicly organized space was the annual *Sportfest* [Sports Celebration], held in summer each year, in different locations. At the time of my fieldwork it was held in Frankfurt. Organized by the *Korea Verband E.V.*, this sporting event takes place every year on Korean Independence Day on the 15th of August. An hour long ceremony commemorates Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, followed by assorted sporting events with teams from different cities competing. It usually ends with a party and concert- with a band or artist from Korea- for the second generation. The *Sportfest* is a meeting space for the first and the second generation, which I will return to in chapter 5 "You have to have Korean parents to understand".

Sometimes in collaboration with the *Korea Verband*, *kyopos* organize weekend seminars for the *kyopos*, to discuss issues and a variety of topics, often connected to the process of identity formation. These take place in different locations and generally last for a weekend. While some of my informants attended them, they generally agreed that "it's a good opportunity for meeting friends and drinking", outside the guided seminar hours that they described as 'lecturing us'. Some of the seminar topics during the time of my fieldwork were directed mainly towards Korea, Korean history and asking whether the second generation was 'losing Korean culture'. At the time of my fieldwork these initiatives seemed to be geared towards fostering a Korean sense of identity, while the 'meeting friends and drinking' aspect was more informative of the processes and dynamics between social actors in interpreting their sense of identities.

Another – more localized and purely second generation - initiative by *kyopos*, for *kyopos* were organized parties that took place in and around Frankfurt. The organizers rented the location- either a club or a pub- and anyone could attend. There was usually a cover fee of a few Euros that went towards renting the location. One of the organizers told me that the initial rationale behind organizing such parties was to provide a location

for *kyopos* to meet outside churches and away from the first generation, and to foster a sense of community. I describe on such party in more detail in chapter 6 “The Good Foreigners”. This particular party took place in a university pub, being one of the smaller ones. Other parties took place in grander venues, like popular nightclubs in Frankfurt, or the Christmas party in a hotel bar.

Generally the parties were announced via *kyopo.de*, an online forum established for the second generation of German-Koreans. The same forum provides a means of making contacts with other *kyopos*, announcing parties and other get-togethers, and discussing a variety of topics. Unlike other forums like *asia-zone.de*, this forum in particular serves *kyopos* across the entire country. The *kyopo* forum was very helpful in gaining access. Before setting out into the field, I posted about my move on the forum, and established a few contacts, which in turn helped me gain more contacts. I posted a few topics on the forums, mainly dealing with asking for practical advice about Frankfurt and where to find a flat, as well as asking for people to volunteer to participate in my research. Within a few days, I had a good number of helpful and welcoming replies.

Another mode of access turned out to be my student mentor, provided to me by the University of Frankfurt, who not only helped me with everyday issues, but with finding contacts via friends of friends. I used a snowball system in getting to know people, but also at parties simply asked people if I could interview them. Using the snowball system aided in finding informants who did not attend the parties, but who were still part of the community, and meeting them in informal situations.

Methodology

When researching in a social science context the vast availability of methods ranging from quantitative to qualitative presents the researcher with several difficulties as to which methods may be best suited for a particular project. Quantitative methods may be able to outline general trends and commonplaces, yet they are ill-suited to provide an in-depth understanding of the workings of a particular social group (Mullings, 1999). As I intended to study a group that had not been intensively studied before, I used qualitative methods.

Methods such as life story interviewing have been used towards understanding a previously invisible group. However, there are pitfalls to using such a method exclusively. “A memory is never simply a record of the past but is constantly being reworked into new kinds of sense according to the needs of the present” (Dawson, 1990:45). Thus, while autobiographical memories are valuable in the exploration of identities, one must not overlook that such narratives are produced for an intended audience. Such narratives are “always open to revision and repositioning, and our life can never be comprehensively told by any one narrative” (Bristow, 1991:121). Life histories as a sole method are limited in scope and fraught with difficulties.

To gain a better understanding, I attempted to establish a rapport with my informants and beside life stories, also used open-ended interviews, to explore the processes and dynamics of social actors experiencing and making sense of the world, and themselves. Using open-ended and informal interviews alongside life histories and formal interviews of set questions, enabled me to develop a more dialogic approach that provided other insights. Most of these interviews took place in cafés and tended to turn into conversations, which proved more insightful than formal interviews. Equally, conversations in bigger groups in an informal environment, such as pub, would often yield different insights than interviews. Comparing these incidents to life histories and interviews with the same informants, the processes and dynamics became clearer.

For first interviews, I had a formal set of questions, covering age, parentage, occupation and nationality. The next question concerned the parents’ migration, their respective ages, nationality and current occupation. I would ask about visits to Korea, linguistic abilities, and whether my interview partner felt German or Korean, why, why not. In first interviews, I would also ask about what my informants considered typically Korean and typically German. After the first interviews, certain trends already began showing in repetition. For example, nearly all of my informants had mentioned the concept of ‘*Han*’ as typically Korean. I discuss *Han* further in chapters 5 and 7. There was no set interview schedule. Interviews tended to take several hours, which is one of the reasons some initial participants fell away. I have not directly quoted these interviews in this thesis, but did use them to help me identifying overall trends. Due to the length of interviews, I requested interviews, but was dependent on informants finding time in

their schedules. It was by no means planned for an interview to take up several hours, but especially informal interviews and life histories tended to take time.

Further interviews took place over a period of time. Later interviews were informal and open-ended, discussing either issues the informant had thoughts on or wanted to clarify, or the trends I had tentatively identified. Such trends included a limited number of visits to Korea, a gendered experience of growing up, parental stress on education, and observations about the majority society. In an effort of asking questions that were not leading, I would usually repeat the informant's own words as a question, or read back the notes I had taken, usually leading to further clarification. After observations, I would discuss my observations with participants in informal conversations, gaining deeper insights and perspectives.

Themes, both predicted and unanticipated, began crystallizing during the course of my fieldwork already, during the process of transcribing interviews and notes. With these themes and findings, I returned to my initial research questions to answer them, finding that the answers I had, required a more nuanced exploration of identity in a wider sense. Activities and discussions I had participated in, indicated that identity was a process of continuous production of hybridity. In order to open up this issue and to conceptualise it fruitfully, in a grounded "conversation" with my fieldwork data, I therefore turned to a number of books that addressed and theorised identity, of which I found Jenkins (1996), Hall (1996) and Parker (1995) especially stimulating and useful.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the limited size of the population I studied and my own relation to it, I placed particular stress upon informed consent and confidentiality. Abiding the Association of Social Anthropologists ethical guidelines, I took all necessary measures to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. I was well aware that my position as an 'insider' lead to my obtaining information that might otherwise not be freely given and thus always ascertained that informed consent was given for me to use the information obtained. Yet, informants tend to forget that researchers are researchers, especially with regards to 'insider ethnography' and the question arises whether important information is being told a friend and would not have been given otherwise (Sarsby, 1984: 132).

‘Informed consent’, which expresses according to the ASA “expresses the belief in the need for truthful and respectful exchange”, makes it clear that consent must continually be renegotiated, should provide for privacy and always fully inform informants of what is written about them.

Seeing that individual researchers have made their own choices as to what constitutes ‘ethical research’ and is appropriate in their specific contexts, so I found solutions to the dilemmas I faced with specific regard to the nature of the community I was studying. That meant not using information that might have been helpful to protect participants. Another dilemma I often faced was that participants would express curiosity about their friends’ interviews, and sometimes tried guessing what others might have said. I continuously asserted that the confidentiality I guaranteed them, extended to others. Keeping the distance and making the informant aware of that distance at the same time, in some cases lead to alienation on the side of the informant, compromising the research. Again, I did not use information I obtained from participants who declined all further meetings, with the exception of noting down general trends, before destroying notes and interviews. Throughout my research I abided by the ASA guidelines and did my utmost to prevent possible misconduct and harm to the very best of my knowledge and ability.

2.4. Meeting the Kyopos- General Observations and some personal introductions

After some general remarks about the second generation, I will introduce some of my key informants. I’ve chosen the following four women, because they represent different age groups within the second generation and appear frequently throughout this study. After introducing them, I will briefly introduce three *kyopo* men that also appear in the course of this study. While these are certainly not the only voices and social actors that have played a large role in my research, I have chosen to introduce others at appropriate moments, where their voices and experiences are contextualised. Kathrin and Jong-Soon are present throughout this study. Johanna is particularly prominent in chapter 4. They all share the same basic background and the experience of being German-Korean with two Korean parents, but their particular experiences depend on their age. My male

informants Klaus, Jens and Alex reappear throughout, but are particularly prominent in chapter 6.

Generally, in interviews, when I asked informants about their parents they often used the expression *der Klassiker* [the classic] as shorthand to say that their mother had come to Germany as a nurse, and their father as a miner. They distinguished themselves thus from ‘the younger ones’ or the ‘Korean-Korean kids’, meaning the children of Korean parents who had come to Germany in more recent years to work for multinational corporations in Frankfurt. They also distinguished themselves from students that way, who had come over from Korea, specifically to attend university in Germany.

One of the factors that distinguished the *kyopos* without such articulated differences were names. Most of my informants had a German first name. The reasoning behind that varied from their parents wanting to give them a ‘German name for a German life’ to ‘the Germans can’t pronounce Korean names anyway’. There were exceptions amongst my informants, and also those who had a ‘German’ and a ‘Korean’ name, but in everyday life they mostly used German first names.

Another practice was language. At *kyopo* parties, amongst friends, or in the karaoke bar, German was the main language of communication. While some of my informants spoke Korean, and some knew rudimentary Korean, German was the one language everyone knew and spoke fluently. Generally my informants referred to particular foods or drinks by their Korean names, but used German in conversation. However singing was done mostly in Korean. I explain this ambivalence in more detail in chapter 7 “Doing Karaoke, Doing Identity”, but note here that while that may appear odd at first glance, it’s not truly as odd within a German context as it sounds. Since foreign-language music on the radio and TV is common in Germany, singing along in a foreign language that one doesn’t necessarily understand is not uncommon.

Finishing the more general observations, I am compelled to point out the significance of smoking. During the time of my fieldwork, almost all of my informants smoked, especially the *kyopo* women. Friends from Korea tell me that Korean women shouldn’t smoke in public, and my female informants told me how much their parents objected to their smoking. Again, this is discussed in more detail later, but worth noting here to present a fuller picture of my informants.

Kathrin:

Kathrin alerted me to the issues surrounding smoking. Kathrin and Jong-Soon were best friends and in their teens when I met them. They were still at school and living with their parents. They were part of the lower age-spectrum of the second generation, had experienced historical events like the end of the Cold War, which facilitated air travel to Korea, and the German- German unification, as children. They had grown up with the renewed debate around integration within Germany.

I met with Kathrin via the online forum for *kyopos*. At the time, she was still at school, just doing her *Abitur*. Bubbly and lively, she was the youngest of three children, and one of two daughters of two Korean parents. Her mother was a former nurse, and her father, who had come to Germany as a miner, had obtained a degree and worked for an international corporation in Frankfurt. Unlike her older brother and sister, Kathrin spoke Korean and told me that she had spent many summers as a child in Korea. She was several years younger than her older siblings, and explained that when they were her age, her parents hadn't had the money to pay for expensive journeys to Korea. Also, her mother hadn't been home much in those days, but as their financial situation improved, she stopped working and focussed on raising Kathrin, also teaching her Korean.

Kathrin was petite, lively and articulate. She enjoyed karaoke, she enjoyed fashion and she enjoyed grumbling that her parents wouldn't allow her to colour her fashionably short hair and objected to some of the fashions, calling them 'trampy'. Like Johanna she was critical of the parent generation, especially when it came to the preferential treatment she saw her parents giving her brother. Gender issues mattered very much to her, and presented an on-going source of conflict to her mind. She often said that finding a *kyopo* boyfriend would make it easier for her, since she could introduce him to her parents and he would share some of the same experiences, being a German-Korean. But she was in two minds about the issue, and mostly would conclude such musings, stating that all *kyopo* males were spoilt by their mothers, which left only a German as a possible boyfriend. All of this, she usually said through a cloud of smoke, chain-smoking one cigarette after another.

Jong-Soon:

Jong-Soon was Kathrin's best friend at the time. She was also in her late teens, also finishing school and equally petite. A little more reserved than Kathrin, she still shared a love for karaoke, fashion and grumbling. Jong-Soon was the younger of two daughters. Her parents were a former nurse and a former miner, though they had started their own business in Frankfurt. She had an older sister who was just finishing her degree at university, and she had recently got into trouble with her parents after deciding to leave their church to become an atheist.

Jong-Soon spoke some Korean, but was more comfortable with German. She was also less critical of the first generation, and didn't share Kathrin's concerns about gender issues. As far as Jong-Soon was concerned, it was not an issue that had to greatly concern her. She enjoyed 'traditional Korean patterns of behaviour', as she called it, for *kyopo* men, which included buying drinks for her. Being at school still and constantly short of cash, she regarded such things as an opportunity for herself. Jong-Soon and Kathrin enjoyed partying and generally enjoying themselves, but through a haze of blue smoke between us, as they lit up one cigarette after another, they were always willing to discuss their views and experiences with me.

Johanna:

Johanna was older than Kathrin and Jong-Soon at the time. She was within the middle spectrum of age for my informants, had attended school during the 1980s and hadn't had the economic possibilities during the time of the Cold War to travel to Korea often. At the time I met her, Johanna was a student at the university. She was doing a degree in economics and considering doing a PhD once she was done with her first degree. Johanna was the friend of a friend, who had mentioned my research to her, and she had volunteered to participate via her friend, who carried the message back to me. Since I was in the UK at the time, we e-mailed a few times and set up a meeting eventually, when I arrived in Frankfurt.

Having grown up in Frankfurt, she was the only child and daughter of a nurse - Mrs Kim- and a retired mechanic- Mr Kim. Both her parents had come to Germany as Korean guestworkers, who met in Germany, married and settled. Johanna did not speak Korean, but spoke fluent French, English and had German as her mother-tongue. She had done several foreign exchanges at university, her last one to France, where she

studied for a year. At present, she was living in a house-share with several friends from university.

Tall and athletic, she never wore make-up and didn't colour her long hair fashionably, as some younger *kyopo* women enjoyed doing. She cycled everywhere and usually wore jeans, dark jumpers and a dark rain jacket. All of her clothes were by popular brands manufactured for outdoors activities, as were the sturdy shoes that she always wore. When going out in the evening, she generally switched the hiking boots for trainers or shoes, but had no patience for fashion.

Johanna was always critical of the Korean community as a whole, and liked keeping to the periphery, although she knew a lot of *kyopos* from church, meetings or parties. Being a student and often abroad, she maintained contacts with her friends, but remained critical of the first generation, and particularly of what she called 'the gossip mongering' within the Korean community. 'Everyone knows and always has to know everything,' she used to complain to me, swiftly followed by the question whether I had interviewed this or that friend of hers yet, and what they had said. She did it on purpose to make a point, but indeed, she was right: many of my other informants did try asking me for gossip. Johanna had a German boyfriend, whom she was keeping a secret from her parents. She was critical of what she was doing in keeping him secret, and intended to tell her parents eventually. She did not intend to tell them- ever- that she smoked like a chimney. Fully aware of such issues, she enjoyed discussing the differences between 'Korean parents' and 'German parents', and comparing her upbringing and life with that of her German friends.

Alex, Klaus and Jens:

The three men are Klaus, Jens and Alex. Klaus and Jens were friends, and Alex and Jens were friends, and while Klaus and Alex got along, they were only friendly. Alex was in his late twenties and a student at the university. He was the son of a nurse and a former miner, who had gone into white collar work eventually. He had grown up in Frankfurt as an only child. He usually dressed very much in Johanna's style, a style that was popular amongst part of the student population, especially those who cycled a lot. He generally preferred dark clothes fit for outdoor activities, and like most others smoked a lot.

Klaus was the oldest of the group, working in the city for a bank, after he had finished his university degree. He was the only son of two Korean parents, who had started their own business. His mother had come to Germany as a nurse, but his father hadn't come to Germany as a miner, but as a university student. Tall, sophisticated and articulate, he would always wear shirts, trousers and leather shoes.

Jens was in his mid-twenties, had just finished his degree and begun a job in the city. The only child of two Korean parents, he- unlike Klaus and Alex- spoke Korean, and enjoyed visits to Korea. Lively and friendly, he had a great interest in Korea and all things Korean, and would help me out with explanations and translations. Together, all three went to the same parties and venues as Jong-Soon and Kathrin, and sometimes Johanna.

2. 5. Conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to show some of the issues, methodologies and limitations in my research. I have also tried to establish my fieldsite as a social sphere of changing location, rather than a fixed place. I have introduced some of my informants here; I will introduce others where appropriate and elaborate on some of the issues I have raised. Other issues, like religious worship in German-Korean life in Frankfurt, the conceptualization of 'half and half' and their self-conceptualization, while important, exceed the scope of this study.

It is important to note that my research questions provided began with a vague notion of tension between essentialized identities, and everyday lived experience. I set out to explore that tension to understand how the second generation of German Koreans make sense of themselves and their environment within the framework of such tension. I found creative ways of positioning, self-narration, communality and ways of representation that encompass the multifaceted experience of being and continuously becoming *kyopo* in Germany.

In the next chapter, I will explore underlying racial ideologies of Germanness to contextualize the history of migration and integration, which situate the second

generation within a specific framework. I will briefly discuss existing literature to provide further context for the exploration of second-generation identity negotiation.

3. ‘Germany makes people into foreigners’: Discourses on national self-understanding, race, migration, integration and second-generation identity

“There are no foreigners in Germany, Germany *makes* people into foreigners¹⁰.” My mother made that statement. She was annoyed with the way an unsuspecting member of the majority society asked her when she would return to her *Heimat* [Homeland]. Having lived and worked in Germany for some thirty years by then, having married and raised a family in Germany, my Mother considers Germany her *Heimat*. But the person who asked the question reacted to her Asian appearance and assumed that she does not belong. It was a reminder for my Mother that after so many years, others still consider her a foreigner- someone who belongs elsewhere and may return there eventually. Everyday othering or ‘making people into foreigners’, as my Mother calls it, are reminders of an understanding of Germanness and belonging, based on the *jus sanguinis*, which until the year 2000 granted citizenship in Germany “on the basis of ethnic lineage or blood” (Watts, 1997:9). The idea of *Heimat* as a physical and emotional space- like a country- belonging to a certain people that are all connected by blood was written into German laws that way. One of the underlying ideas that I will explore in this chapter is the idea of ‘belonging’ within a German context, and what ‘Germanness’ means. The German state has struggled with accepting that it has become an immigration country, and these days still struggles with finding a concept for integration. Only in 2005, despite the fact that immigration has played a leading role in the economic development of the country since the post-war period, did the German state declare itself an immigration country.

¹⁰ In Deutschland gibt es keine Ausländer, Deutschland macht Ausländer.

Migrants have long become part of Germany's social fabric, the most prominent group of migrants being Turkish guest workers, although their permanence was not the aim of official policies. As a direct consequence, the Federal Republic of Germany has not pursued a policy of permanent integration for migrants, although many of them have been living in Germany for over three decades. Some migrant groups are more visible than others, receiving little public attention, such as the Korean¹¹ community in Germany. In July 2003 there were 29,700 Koreans living in Germany¹², mainly consisting of former nurses and miners sent to Germany during the 1960s and 1970s. Statistically, this is a small number, which limits direct contact with the vast majority of German society. The Korean community has been present in Germany for up to forty years and remains inconspicuous.

To contextualise the present day situation of the second generation of Korean descent, and the limits of free identity formation in Germany, in this chapter, I will first provide an overview of the history of migration to Germany and outline the expectations the German government had about the nature and scope of such migration. This only reaches as far back as the 1950s, when the first 'guest-workers' [*Gastarbeiter*] arrived from Italy. The term 'guest-worker' in itself needs specific attention and helps explaining the complexities of the current debate. This context and the expectations are necessary to explain the present situation of second generations in Germany, since they directly informed policies.

I will then explore the majority society's views and subsequent relationship with migrants. In order to do this, it is necessary to explore the construction of a national self-understanding of 'Germanness' by looking at 'race' and gender. How do these constructs inform the present debates? What impact does that have on the situation of migrants to Germany?

The construction of Germanness, gender and the historical facts of migration to Germany go hand in hand with state policies concerning integration. Only after looking at the history of migration and the ideas that surrounded the recruitment of 'guest-labour' can one contextualise current debates about integration. 'Integration' is a fashionable word in Germany these days, used in the media and by politicians as a

¹¹ NB: 'Koreans' refers indiscriminately to naturalized citizens of Korean ancestry as well. 'Korea' unless otherwise indicated means 'The Republic of South Korea'. 'Germany' refers to the 'Federal Republic of Germany' unless otherwise indicated.

¹² Informationsdienst der Republik Korea, Seoul, Korea/www.korea.net April 2005

solution that will create a harmonious society of German citizens and so-called *Deutsche mit Migrationshintergrund* [Germans with a migration background¹³]. I ask what ‘integration’ means in Germany. Looking at policies and measures over the last few decades, I will then look at the effects and consequences. I will ask: What are these measures? What are the aims? And what are the current concerns?

Many public debates centre on the second and third generation of the Turkish minority and the problems of integration. I will attempt to contextualise such debates by looking at some of the literature surrounding second generations, drawing in particular on the few available sources written directly about the second generation of German-Koreans. I argue that discourses on Germanness, gender and integration provide a framework that is restrictive, confusing, and obfuscating underlying ideas about race. Consequently, the discourse about identity and integration, becomes a discourse in helplessness that veils the underlying ethno-cultural German national self-understanding and shifts the responsibility of integration to the migrants. But migrants cannot ‘integrate’ into a society that perpetuates an ethno-cultural self-understanding, which excludes those “who carry their foreignness in their faces” (Stolcke, 1995:8).

This exploration in its entirety will provide the context of history and limitations of identity formation, which I will add to in the next chapter, by looking at the experiences of the first generation that came to Germany.

3.1. ‘Guests who stayed’ - The history of migration to Germany

In this section, I will look at Germany’s history as an immigration country, and the policies and issues surrounding migration. First, I will give an overview over the history of migration to Germany, beginning after WW2. The policies and the nature of ‘guest-labour’ help towards understanding the debates that followed. I will explore the different classifications for migrants, and public attitudes towards them to explore the current debates surrounding integration, beginning with the German reunification. All

¹³ Someone with a ‘migration background’ is someone who was either born outside Germany to non-German parents and got naturalized or someone with one, or two non-German (or naturalized) parents. For more information: http://www.integration-in-deutschland.de/SubSites/Integration/EN/00__Home/home-node.html?__nnn=true

of this serves to explain the complex discourses that surround the lives of *kyopos*, and in which they situate themselves.

For decades, the *Leitmotiv* of German immigration policies has been that Germany is not an immigration country (Rist, 1978; Brubaker, 1992; Chapin, 1997; Chin, 2007; Mandel, 2008, etc). Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States appear as typical examples of immigration countries, each having drawn much of its population from foreign lands over the past few centuries, whereas Germany appears a country from which people emigrated. The German public has long forgotten migrants such as the Huguenots who settled in parts of Germany after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes 1685, though French surnames remain, and has equally forgotten the Polish migrants who came mainly to the Ruhr area to work in the coal pits and steel industry, and by 1907 numbered approximately 950,000 (Chapin, 1997:05).

Migration is not a new phenomenon to Germany, both in terms of emigration as well as immigration. Academics (Uhlig 1974; Wilpert 1977; Rist 1978; Bade 1992; Salim 1997; Koschyk, 1998 etc) have long pointed out that Germany is a country of immigration. The realization is not a new one, and in spite of repeated claims from other politicians -like the ex-Chancellor Kohl- others recognized that in spite of policies to the contrary, Germany had become a country of immigration a long time ago. But rather than going back as far as looking at Huguenot migration to Germany in the 17th century, salient to this discussion is looking at more recent migration movements to Germany.

Salim (1997) divides migration to Germany after WW 2 into three phases, beginning in 1955. After the war, in spite of the large populations of Germans driven out from the former Eastern parts of Germany that settled largely in West Germany (Brubaker, 1992:168), by the mid 1950s, the demand for labourers exceeded the supply. The lack of labourers first became apparent in agriculture, and soon led the Federal Republic to lobby strongly for “an abolishment of restrictions regarding working foreigners and the creation of freedom of movement’ on a European level” (Salim, 1997:33). In December 1955, the first treaty with Italy followed, after which Germany recruited Italian labourers, especially for agriculture. Several factors made foreign recruitment of labour viable in the following years: the economy continued growing, East Germany closed its borders and built the Wall so that the flow of labourers from the East ceased; demand for workers kept exceeding local resources; increasing numbers of young men were inducted for national service in the army, shorter working days and increased social

insurance costs, etc (1997:33). During the boom years after the war, the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* [Federal Employment Institute] asserted repeatedly that economic growth could only be sustained through the short-term, temporary importation of *Gastarbeiter* [guestworkers], creating a series of recruitment treaties with countries that had labour surpluses: Italy, 1955; Spain and Greece, 1960; Turkey, 1961 and 1964; Portugal, 1964; Yugoslavia, 1968 (Chapin, 1997:11) and South Korea officially in 1970, (Booth, 1992:110). The number of foreign workers rose from 1.7% of all workers in 1961 to 6.5% in 1970, to 11.9% in 1973 (Salim, 1997).

The second phase of migration to Germany began in 1973 when the economic downturn began with the so-called ‘Oil-Crisis’ – as a result of the Middle Eastern War 1973. During the economic downturn, the German government instituted the *Anwerbestopp* [recruitment stop]. The number of foreigners employed in Germany decreased as workers whose contracts ran out left the country, and sank from 11.9% in 1973 to 7.5% in 1987 (1997:34). Nonetheless, the number of foreigners living in Germany rose from 4.3% of the total population in 1973 to 7.3% in 1988. The reason for this is that after 1973, the number of workers’ families that joined foreign workers in Germany increased. The initially limited stay of foreign workers turned into a permanent situation (Brubaker, 1997:35). During the 1970s this increasingly led to social concerns about integration, causing some German states, especially Bavaria and Baden- Württemberg to discourage settlements of migrants, by instituting a system of ‘rotation’ of foreign workers, and supporting the Federal Government’s decision to stop recruiting foreign workers entirely in November 1973 (1992:172). However when the *Anwerbestopp* [recruitment-stop] came, it was too late to halt migration to Germany, and had the – for the government- adverse effect that migrants settled rather than going back and forth, since that possibility was taken away. Instead, the decision prompted a surge in the immigration of family members (Brubaker, 1992:172), leading to a permanently settled population of migrants.

Salim’s third phase began in 1989, which saw another rise of foreigners joining the labour market (1997:35). Due to Germany’s naturalization laws, the rise in numbers of foreigners employed in Germany is easily explained: The second generation of migrant children began joining the labour force (1997:35). Hence, the rise in numbers of foreigners on the labour market does not actually tell us anything about migration, but more about German citizenship laws and integration. Events in Salim’s identified third

phase (1997:35) sparked a renewed debate about migrants and integration. This third phase therefore merits closer attention, since it brought to the fore issues that remain unsolved. As indicated above, permanent immigration was not a goal and the government ignored the possibility that guest workers could become long-term immigrants (Chapin, 1997:10). Earlier European experiences with ‘return migrants’ supported the idea that many of the workers would return home voluntarily. Roughly 25% of Europeans migrating to the United States in the 1870s returned home, and in the 1890s 45% returned (Chapin, 1997). However when the economic downturn came policy makers’ beliefs in the guest-workers’ short-run orientations, and that the market forces would regulate the number of foreigners, were disappointed, when the anticipated mass-exodus did not occur (Chapin, 1997:12). Since many guest-workers decided to stay in Germany for an extended period, it is not surprising that family reunification led to a rapid increase in the foreign population. Until 1973 mainly young men had come to Germany, but afterwards, more and more relatives of guest workers migrated in family reunification programs, and thus the incentives for returning home decreased. Especially during times of recession fewer guest workers returned to their homelands since permits for coming back to Germany were harder to come by (Chapin, 1997:17).

The recruitment of South Korean nurses and miners did not halt in 1973, but continued- for the nurses- until 1977 (Yoo, 1991). Shortages of qualified hospital staff made nurses valuable workers and put them into a privileged position. Many German hospitals didn’t want to lose nurses that had worked there, and helped the women to find ways of staying beyond the three years that their contracts ran for (Yoo, 1991; Han, 1991). I will discuss in the following chapter 4 “Yellow Angels” just how privileged the nurses’ position was, compared to that of other guestworkers, but suffice to say at this point that the Korean nurses- in the eyes of their immediate environment- had begun transcending their temporal status as guests.

The belief that as ‘guests’ foreign labour migrants would eventually return ‘home’ effectively created a two-tiered society. Through legal regulations the ‘imported’ force was separated from the host-society, which moreover implied that they were supposed to maintain a distinct cultural and ethnic identity (McNeill, 1986). The word *Gast* meaning ‘guest’ implies that such workers were expected to ‘go home’ eventually, which a large number did not do. ‘Temporariness’ being one of the defining characters of the guestworker scheme in theory defined that there was no need for the ‘Guest’ to be

incorporated into the host society (Soysal,1994). The term ‘guestworkers’, which has recently been used less often, underlined the ambiguity of the migrants’ status, indicating that by definition they are staying a limited period of time, as guests, and are not expected to settle. Guests are also bound by the rules and regulations of the hosts, and guests rarely feel ‘at home’ in foreign environs (Mandel, 2008:55). Furthermore, they are workers, meaning that they were reduced to their economic value, marginalizing and objectifying these migrants, while at the same time pre-empting the question of integration, since guests always return home. If one, as Rist (1978) writes, accepts the rationale frequently espoused in Germany that these people are guests and therefore not immigrants, then there cannot be any question that the guest workers have come to Germany to work and not to spend their lives there. Thus it would not be appropriate to “consider measures to foster social and cultural integration (Rist, 1978)”.

In the early days the German state did not even provide a clearly defined information policy for the migrants as their temporary stay was taken for granted. Migrant broadcasting was soon instituted with the two-fold reasoning that it could provide helpful and practical information and integrative orientation concerning the adaptation of the new social and cultural environment, while at the same time it was intended to maintain links with the migrants’ national cultures by means of information from and about the sending countries (Oepen, 1984). Seventy percent of those broadcasts were devoted to the maintenance of bonds with the home countries and their national identities indicating that they provided hardly any support for the integration into German society and culture (1984:115). Germany continuously tried persuading guest workers to return home, abolishing restrictions that limited emigration, improving information to migrants, and providing cash inducements for those returning to their original homelands upon surrendering their work and residency permits. In addition social security contributions were refunded immediately upon their arriving in their home countries. All of these measures failed (Chapin, 1997:18).

While Germany still persisted in denying that it had become an immigration country and continued calling its migrants ‘guests’, those guests had settled down. At the time Rist (1978) was writing, many ‘guest’- workers had long since brought their families to Germany, and were raising families. A case in point would have been my mother who had married, settled down and had her first child that year. It was unlikely- though not impossible- that she would leave Germany again. Initially, the migrants rarely saw

themselves as permanent settlers (Brubaker, 1992:171), however by the early 1970s, there were already signs that the ‘guests’ were increasingly staying. The birthrate to immigrant parents rose, so that between 1966 and 1970 it increased by 140 percent (1992:172).

By the time of the economic downturn, in the early 1980s, the ‘guests’ still hadn’t left. Despite government incentives, many had made their lives in Germany, were raising families, and had children in school already. One could say that life got in the way of the best-laid plans, and West Germany began to wake up to the fact that it had “called for labourers, but humans came” (cf, Chin, 2007; Mandel, 2008 etc) .

3.2. ‘The threat of foreign men’- Germanness, Race and Gender

Historically, Germany’s national self-understanding and its understanding of race, are-euphemistically- troubled. The Federal Republic, by way of laws and education, has tried to engage in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*¹⁴ to come to terms with the Nazi past. The central part that ‘race’ played in the atrocities of the Third Reich, and the close connection of the term to the Nazi years and said atrocities, renders ‘race’ a loaded word. Nonetheless, to further an understanding of current debates about integration, one must look at how the past has influenced the present, how the term ‘race’ has evolved, is understood, marginalized and yet present within a German context. Some theories are necessary to explain and explore German national self-understanding as an ethno-cultural one, and a discussion of gender adds another layer of complexity, that is important when discussing migrants and integration.

I posit that ideas about masculinity and femininity in Germany, and the construction of men and women are vital to bringing nuances to the national self-understanding as an ethno-cultural nation that influences the discourse on migrants. If, as Chin (2007) writes: “The treatment of women [...] became the primary litmus test to determine whether foreigners- and especially Turks- possessed the capacity to function effectively within a Western liberal democratic society” (2007:143), then an understanding of the construction of German masculinity and femininity and different roles is the basis for this test.

¹⁴ Idiomatically translated it means to come to grips with the past, which in this case means acceptance of guilt, and trying to ensure that the past doesn’t repeat itself.

The problem with establishing a German construction of gender is that gender is a relational concept, yet within national discourse is used as a monolithic one. Gender relations are dynamic and concepts of gender are subject to change, however in national discourse static conceptions are often used to justify and consolidate an ideal type of national community. Therefore what follows is a theoretical discussion of how male and female roles were, and are constructed within a German national context, by first looking at the theoretical framework, before looking at specific circumstances of evolving gender relations to roughly the time of the first wave of labour migration to Germany.

The crux of the matter here, I argue, is that the German insistence on the idea of and the discourse surrounding a *Kulturnation* [Culture nation], veils the core ethnic understanding of Germanness, ignoring the racism inherent. The German national self-understanding is that of a people connected through blood and soil, and the *Vaterland* is a male nationalizing project, which both ignores and problematizes migrant integration.

As part of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, every pupil attending public schools will hear about the founding myth of the first German unification¹⁵ - which roughly corresponds to Smith's (1986) theory that ethnic nations are gradually or discontinuously formed on the basis of pre-existing *ethnie* and ethnic ties so that ethnic ties become transformed, mobilized, territorialized and politicised. The conception of the nation is different from the civic one as it stresses genealogy, populism, customs, dialects and nativism, or 'Kultur'. Myths and symbols create a "web of significance" (Geertz, 1973), which not only provide moral charters for nations but also create solidarity and distinctiveness from others.

The idea of the German *Kulturnation*¹⁶ as compared to the French *Staatsnation*- [State-nation] is perpetuated in German history schoolbooks, elevating language, shared culture and the idea of being an ethnic *Volk* above the importance of the state, as the founding principle of Germany. This stress on common *Kultur* that binds a nation and moves away from 'bad' nationalism based on the racial notions of the Third Reich, and veils the underlying German self-understanding of the German people as a nation of sanguines. "Nation is when one sees and speaks with one another. Nation is when one

¹⁵ 1871, when the small German states united to form the Empire.

¹⁶ 'Culture-nation' meaning a nation whose people are connected via common culture rather than sharing a state. Compare 'Staatsnation' ('State-nation'), meaning a nation whose people are connected via sharing the laws and territory of a common state.

can look back on a shared history, when one has grown up and lives in the same culture; Nation is when one speaks the same language.” (Fischer & Wirtz, 1998:491). Thus the perception of Germanness remains strangely devoid of express political and ethnic implications, being seemingly based upon a common culture and language.

The Third Reich, its ideologies and the Holocaust, appear like an anomaly in this perception. Every pupil also hears about it, and how horribly misguided understandings of ‘race’ determined the fate of millions of innocent people. It is a dark chapter of German history that the national effort of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is trying to come to terms with, partly, I argue by perpetuating the idea of a benign ‘*Kulturnation*’ and the myth that the German people, sharing a culture, created a nation for themselves.

Blatantly, the implications of a benign effort for a greater good, involving everyone participating in German culture, ignore the political realities and machinations of the day, while serving as a continuation of an inclusive, non-dangerous nationalism, unlike Social Nationalism. Stolcke (1995) argues that such perceptions make for a “rhetoric of exclusion” (1995:1) that is based on cultural fundamentalism, after racism has been discredited politically. Instead of employing racist rhetoric, “the idea of cultural distinctness is being endowed with new divisive force” (1995:2). In this rhetoric, immigrants are constructed as a threat to the cultural integrity of the nation, and social tensions are attributed to the presence of immigrants with alien cultures rather than to racism (1995:3).

While German history textbooks frame the national self-understanding in cultural terms, legislative measures indicate a different understanding that underlines Stolcke’s (1995) point. Until recently, in Germany, the 1913 system of pure *jus sanguinis*¹⁷, with no trace of *jus soli*¹⁸, continued to determine the citizenship status of immigrants and their descendents (Brubaker, 1992:165). That is to say that “German citizenship has always been attributed only to descendants of German citizens (1992:72). And “the restrictiveness of German citizenship vis-à-vis immigrants [...] reflects the ethno-cultural understanding of nation-state membership, according to which *Staatsangehörigkeit*¹⁹ presupposes and expresses *Volkszugehörigkeit*²⁰” (1992:51).

¹⁷ “Right of the blood”- is the policy by which citizenship is determined by having an ancestor who was a national or a citizen of the state.

¹⁸ “Right of the soil”- is the policy by which citizenship is determined by birth in the territory of a state.

¹⁹ Literally: belonging to a state, meaning nationality.

²⁰ Belonging to a people

Even with a substantial second generation immigrant population, the *jus sanguinis* remained in place and became an anomaly, heightened by the influx of ethnic German immigrants since 1988 (1992:165). In accordance with this idea of the ethnic ‘Volk’, the Alien Act of 1990 says that “Germany is not a country that accepts immigrants” and the vast majority of its citizens are native born with centuries-long family ties to Germany (Chapin, 1997:1). Germany seems content considering itself a homogenous construct in spite of a long history of migration and the fact that one in ten residents is legally classified a foreigner (1997:3). What the official narrative on ‘Germanness’, how it came about and how it fits into the present notion of the European Community disguises, Germany’s laws state somewhat more clearly: You are either born an ethnic German with centuries-long family ties to Germany or you are simply not German.

Rather than looking at the Third Reich, the postwar years and the time of regeneration, provide a better understanding and a layer of complexity to highlight the present debates surrounding gender and race. It would far exceed the scope of this work to address all the highly complex issues surrounding gender and the nation, but several points need addressing. The above outlined national self-understanding seems devoid of gender, yet implicitly addresses it by stressing family-ties and blood-relatedness, meaning that while the way in which national identity and the nation are conceptualized in such meta-narratives on ethnic nations, they are at the same time conceptualized as large families. This underlying idea of the national family makes exploring gender important, especially in relation to race.

Central to this is exploring the effects of defeat in WW2 on concepts of masculinity and femininity. The defeat in WW2 led to a demasculinization of German men, and an eventual reassertion of male authority, in which discourses on race played an important role (Fehrenbach, 1998:04). The experience of defeat went hand in hand with narratives of sexual violence perpetrated on women by occupying soldiers. According to Fehrenbach (2005) the rapes committed by the Red Army became “one of ‘the founding mythologies’” (2005:50) of the West German state, while the rapes perpetrated by German soldiers in Russia were largely ignored²¹.

²¹ The public largely ignored the crimes perpetrated by the German army during WW2. In 1995 the image of the ‘unblemished’ German army was called into question in a travelling exhibition about its crimes, sparking public debate.

As the Cold War emerged, so too did the stylized West German narratives about 'Asiatic' Red Soldiers that served to recast the German nation as the victim of a Barbaric bolshevism²² (2005:50). Traditionally German masculinity was defined in terms of three P's: protectors, providers and procreators (Fehrenbach, 1998). Defeat in war had robbed German men of that role, leading to a threat to native masculinity and patriarchy (Fehrenbach, 2005:54). In West Germany many narratives about the demasculinization of German men focussed on French Moroccan troops and African-American GIs (Fehrenbach, 1998:05). In post-war society men of a different skin colour than that of the majority society were considered sexually deviant and violent.

Looking at abortion can provide a further layer of complexity. In postwar Germany, the legal status of abortion was unclear, which allowed for considerable leeway in the interpretation of existing rules. Fehrenbach (2005) quotes a memo to district officials and health workers in 1946 that explicitly states that "a secret decree was issued by the Bavarian state government according to which the termination of a pregnancy is possible in cases of rape by coloured troops" (2005:58). In practice that meant that abortion was tolerated if a German woman had been violated, as long as the perpetrator was non-Caucasian, and especially if the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator was black. Initially, racial stereotypes about sexually predatory black males thus could work in favour of a woman seeking abortion, but within months of defeat images of the "pathologically promiscuous and materialist 'Negerliebchen' or 'nigger-lover' were popularized" (2005:61). This meant that women who chose to enter relationships with mainly- African-American GIs were vilified²³. In some cases this went as far as German men attacking the German girlfriends of US soldiers to shear their heads (2005:63).

The lingering national- socialist ideology of *Rassenschande* [racial disgrace] certainly had a lot to do with such claims of betrayal. In postwar Germany, authorities and academics were trying to revamp racial understanding and practice in Germany

²² Similar narratives existed during the 3rd Reich.

²³ While all of this at first glance seems to play into the theories on nationhood and seems removed from everyday lives, such attitudes were alive and well when I was a teenager in the 1990s, living close to a US army post in Germany. It was a minor village scandal, when a friend of mine introduced her African-American GI boyfriend to her family. The gossip at the time rumoured that she couldn't find a 'decent German boy'. Not only older relatives, but also young people repeated these accusations. My social environment at the time made a difference between *Amiflittchen* (Americans'-slut) and *Negerflittchen* (niggers'-slut), making a clear racial divide that indicated that they generally considered 'Americans' to be Caucasians. Interestingly, years later, I asked friends from the North of Germany whether there were any corresponding names for German women fraternizing with British troops, but none of the young people I spoke to, knew of any.

(Fehrenbach, 2005:75), particularly in trying to deal with the children of German women and African-American soldiers. These children were subject to anthropological studies in the 1950s. However, what the anthropological studies of the time show is that “race” and “difference” were used as the defining criteria of a group of approximately 5000 children, and how the biological racist hygienic model of society continued unquestioned (Campt & Grosse, 1994).

While other European countries moved away from racism, the heritage of racial hygiene and eugenics remained in Germany. Thus, for example, a study by the anatomist and anthropologist, Eugen Fischer, dating back to 1904, seeking to establish Mendel’s genetic inheritance laws among humans, while looking at the mixed-race population in a German colony in Africa, remained a definitive work in the field of human genetics within Germany, until the 1960s (1994:54). Speaking about the group known as “Rehoboter Bastards”, he writes that “in this racial ability [intelligence], our Bastards are far inferior to the Europeans, as are all Bastards. [...] That negates all evidence for so-called equality and equal value, shown by a few highly talented Bastard individuals.” (Fischer, 1961:01)

Some challenged such discourses, and called for rethinking the concept of race, especially in light of the Nazi past, like member of parliament Luise Rehling, in a speech in 1952 did. Others saw the biracial children in Germany as a serious social problem, due to their paternity and racial difference (Fehrenbach, 2005:76). The West German Government debated them in parliament, and conducted surveys to establish an empirical basis on which it could initiate “negotiations so that *Negermischlingskinder* [Negro mixed blood children] be raised – where possible- in the homelands of their fathers” (2005:77). It has to be said that the children inherited German citizenship from their mothers. They were born German, but due to phenotype and the lingering negative associations, they were clearly not German enough. Bluntly put, being German meant being white.

Plans to send the children to North Africa instead, further illustrate this point. Catholic missionaries spoke against the plan, because “the Europeans and the Africans despise them. [...] The mixed blood child rebels against the sting of disdain” (Campt& Grosse, 1994:03). Thus the plan came to nothing, and the children remained a German ‘problem’. However, what is also remarkable about the above quote is the unquestioning assumption that racial biology is destiny, making all biracial children the

same, hence the missionaries speak about them in the singular. An anthropological study by Walter Kirchner, conducted in the 1950s about these children, similarly and unquestioningly used assumptions about racial biology, stating that the “Negro inheritance” gave the children a tendency to be hotheaded, impulsive, wilful and disobedient, which could however be counteracted with nurturing and appropriate socialization (Fehrenbach, 2005:91). Kirchner’s study stands out insofar as it takes into account the social environment of children, which harbours its own problems. As mentioned above, the German girlfriends of African-American soldiers were vilified, and often suspected of being prostitutes or having a weak moral character.

Anthropologists and social workers saw the German mothers of biracial babies as troubled, disruptive or of below average abilities, where they detected behavioural lapses in the children. This gendered analysis continued to legitimate assessments of women who engaged in interracial relations as immoral or asocial. Social pathologies were understood to stem from problems of socialization and family dynamics, and therefore maternal failure. (2005:105)

The postwar Republic attempted moving away from its understanding of race, but relied heavily on the gendered analysis. Fehrenstein quotes the historian Ruth Feldstein as saying that “representations of women as mothers developed in conjunction with debates about who was a healthy citizen and what was a healthy democracy”, claiming that the same argument can be made for Germany during that period of time (2005:105). As the nucleus of the nation, the family as the cradle of future citizens, was a focal point of the Federal Republic stressing the domestic role of women as mothers which was supported by leading parties of the day such as the CDU [Christian Democratic Union] who were seeking to “re-domesticate women to resolve the post-war crisis of the family” (Jarausch & Geyer, 2003:258). While legal equality appeared to be guaranteed within the constitution, amendments²⁴ were aimed at sacralising marriage, motherhood and the family and the re-domestication of women into their traditional roles of virtuous femininity and motherhood.

²⁴ While the West German constitution guaranteed equality between the sexes in Art 3, Paragraph 2. (1949), it then swiftly proceeded in amendments to reconstitute the traditional separation of roles with the *Ehegesetz* [marriage law] 1957, in which women were ‘allowed’ to work in as far as this did not obstruct their ‘duty in marriage and family’ and also making it a woman’s duty to work if ‘her husband cannot support the family’. Housework was regarded as the norm for woman’s work within this law and expressly said so. This, combined with the constitution’s article 6 that placed marriage, motherhood and the family under the particular protection of the state, served to undermine the alleged gender equality.

The lingering notions about ‘race’, and the idea of a threat to German women, and therefore families, from dark-skinned – meaning: foreign- men impacted on migrants to Germany. National discourses that relegate women to the ‘home’, where gender relations become constitutive of the ‘essence’ of cultures (Yuval- Davis, 1997:43), construct threats to women as threats to an entire national culture and people. Newspaper articles in the late 1960s emphasized too much foreign influence and the dangers to German women and girls, presented by seductive *Südländer* [Southlanders] (Chin, 2007:61). *Südländer* in this case refers to the Mediterranean area without reference to a particular country of origin, but it is assumed that the men in question are darker skinned than stereotypical Germans. In the late 1960s this would have referred to the guestworkers from Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

Summarizing one might argue that far from succeeding with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the overt topic of race has become a taboo, and the Third Reich’s racial ideologies, though openly rejected, lingered long into the postwar years. The debate about national self-understanding and belonging, in its effort to move away from the form of nationalism leading to the Nazi atrocities, has shifted into the seemingly benign and inclusive realm of culture, deriving its legitimation from the myth of the German *Kulturation*.

Yet, the laws on citizenship, and the postwar *Negermischlinge*, coupled with gender relations, throw such benign cultural inclusivity into sharp relief. Only those born German are German, because their parents were German, and their parents before them, creating a family of sanguines. The *Negermischlinge* threatened that fiction, and the debates and studies surrounding them, show racial ideologies prevailed, even though these were German-born children. How deeply ingrained ideas about ‘race’ are, is indicated by a 2003 case in which a spokesman for the Wiesbaden Police asked for information about a *Neger* [Negro]. His reasoning was that he said it so that “everyone would know what is meant” (Hyung, 2008:140). This isn’t an isolated case. A Berlin judge used the same word “because a black man is a *Neger*” (2008:140). Similarly, the term *Mischlingskind* is still in use; and it is often used without any self-consciousness. In fact, during the time of my fieldwork, I regularly walked past a billboard advertising a charity looking for donations to send to the *Mischlingskinder* in Uganda. Many of my informants used the term to describe half-German and half Koreans, although they mostly preferred the term “*halb und halb*” [half and half].

The unpalatable history and continuing issues with race behind the term, come out in everyday discussions. Often speakers will gush about how pretty *Mischlingskinder* are, and/or will worry in the same breath about future difficulties with identity. As with the thoughtless use of *Neger*, such usage and the accompanying worry are revealing about how deeply ingrained the racist heritage is. Unfortunately, ‘race’ is a bad word in Germany, due to the connections to National Socialism, rendering an open and constructive public discussion difficult, but it cannot be ignored as contextual for the debates surrounding migrants and integration in the following section.

3.4. ‘Anatolia is only one tram-stop away’ - Public discourses on migrants and integration in Germany

The discourses surrounding foreigners attempt to define the vague concept of integration and re-define Germanness. Beginning there, I look at different models of integration in Germany, and the difficulties surrounding them, before discussing the perceived place of immigrants in German society, and perceptions and discussions surrounding migrants and integration, dichotomizing ‘good’ and ‘bad’ foreigners.

German citizenship law changed in 2000 to allow for a form of the *jus soli*, meaning that presently children born in Germany can gain German citizenship under certain conditions. These include at least one parent having been resident in Germany for up to eight years or having indefinite leave to remain²⁵. But changes in law do not mean integration. Currently public debates focus particularly on the integration of the Turkish minority, but there is no clear definition of ‘integration’.

At different times, different concepts and solutions were raised, but the debates about foreigner relations can be articulated through three main positions: closure, culture and coexistence (Barbieri, 1998:73). The first pertains to the idea that Germany belongs to ethnic Germans alone and considers foreigners a threat. The second stresses culture as a concept that is distanced from overt references to ethnicity and race, privileging the willingness or unwillingness of foreigners “to transfer their national loyalty and to take

²⁵ http://www.bundesregierung.de/nn_646700/Content/DE/StatischeSeiten/Breg/IB/Einbuengerung/gp-a1-voraussetzungen.html

on a German cultural identity (1998:74)”. The final position suggest the possibility of Germans coexisting with others, where the ‘basis for inclusion is the membership in the state society (that is, involvement and participation in the economic and social structure of the community’ (1998:75).

The first model is based on the assertion of fundamental differences between peoples’ genetic make-ups and traditions, which asserts the presence of foreigners as a threat. This position was directly taken by a group of intellectuals in 1981 in what became known as ‘The Heidelberg Manifesto’, in which a group of professors and doctors suggested a ‘known ethnic catastrophe of a multicultural society’ (Mandel, 2008:59), while leaving the ‘known catastrophe’ undefined. The manifesto however clearly expressed a fear of for the education of German children in classes dominated by ‘illiterate foreigners’, referring specifically to the Turkish minority children in the German midst (2008:59).

Racist understandings of Germanness and fear of *Überfremdung*²⁶ are at the heart of the group’s suggestions. The manifesto expressly suggests that *Gastarbeiter* be returned to their respective homelands, thus cleansing the *Heimat* of ‘undesirables’ (2008:60). The rhetoric used is strongly reminiscent of National Socialist rhetoric and ideologies, although the group dissociated itself from racism, ideological nationalism and extremism. Nonetheless the Neo-Nazi slogan of the 1990s ‘*Deutschland den Deutschen, Ausländer raus*’ [Germany for the Germans, foreigners out] seems to summarize their position. Incidents such as in the 1990s in Mölln, when arson attacks killed eight Turkish Germans²⁷, are connected to an understanding of Germany as a nation that has grown organically and ethnically, and that it is under attack (cf Chin, 2007:150).

What the Heidelberg Manifesto addresses particularly are children and the negative effects German children might suffer. Ethnic foreigners are conceptualized as a direct threat to the German family, and thereby the future of the German people. This needs to be placed within the context of the German government’s concern about the negative birthrate²⁸ among ethnic Germans in Germany, opposed to the high, positive birthrate amongst the Turkish minority, leading to Germany’s strongly pronatalist policies

²⁶ The fear that ‘unbearable numbers of foreigners will overtake German society (Mandel, 2008:60)’

²⁷ I use ‘Turkish Germans’ rather than ‘Turks’ in this context to indicate that they were what Bellers (2003) calls ‘de-facto Germans’.

²⁸ Negative birthrate means that statistically fewer children are born than needed to sustain the size of the population.

(Mandel, 2008:60). Such pro-natalist policies are exemplified in a 2002 political slogan against a possible Green Card scheme to allow Indian migrant workers into Germany. *Kinder statt Inder* [Children instead of Indians] was the slogan that the Christian Democratic Party used to protest against the importation of foreign labour migrants, demanding that the German people have more children, rather than allowing Indian workers to migrate to Germany. Considering the fact that the labour market had a demand in the present, and not in the future when those children were adults, the slogan was fraught with possibilities for ridicule.

But what such demands indicate is the connection between a fear of foreigners, pro-natalist policies and the conceptualization of the role of women. In 2005 a small moral panic swept through articles in German newspapers²⁹, after statistics revealed that apparently 40% of female university graduates have no children. At the time, the number caused a small storm in the media and words such as ‘birthing strike’ were used, and the media sought reasons and answers (Konietzka & Kreyenfeld, 2007). Currently the debate still flares up now and again in the media, highlighting an on-going preoccupation with the fear that German people are becoming extinct and the sex lives of female university graduates. Taking all these things together, Baribieri’s (1998) first model characterizes the anxieties of some parts of German society in the face of perceived threats by the presence of alien subjects (Mandel, 2008:59).

The second model privileges culture. It raises the idea of a German culture above considerations of ethnic belonging, but demanding the willingness of the foreigners to take on a German cultural identity. Stolcke (1995) criticizes this approach as a shift away from discredited racial ideas towards “an ideology of cultural exclusion [in which] cultural sameness is the prerequisite for access to citizenship rights” (1995:8). She points out that “immigrants carry their foreignness in their faces” (1995:8). Using phenotype as a marker of cultural difference shifts the responsibility for integration towards the ‘othered’ immigrant whose different culture is presupposed. The ‘other’ must assimilate to become ‘us’.

Events in the 1990s highlighted the pitfalls of such an approach. In the context of attacks on Turkish migrants and other foreigners, xenophobic violence became an issue for the German government. A report published in 1993 entitled *Hostility toward Foreigners in Germany: Facts, Analyses, Arguments* attempts addressing the issues.

²⁹ *Die Zeit* [44/2005]

However the key word in the title is *Ausländer*, meaning much more than ‘foreigner’ or ‘stranger’, but literally ‘outlander’, someone who does not belong. This includes not only recent refugees, but also second or third generation descendants of migrant workers (Mandel, 2008:62). The entire report is more concerned with addressing the possible negative image Germany might gain abroad. It states unequivocally “there is no reason whatever to compare the post-unification situation in Germany with that existing at the time of the Weimar Republic” (Bundesrepublik, 1993: 05). The underlying concern is that Germany might be compared to Nazi Germany again, leading to a loss in foreign investment (Mandel, 2008:62). Thirty pages are devoted to ‘integrative measures’, though integration is never defined properly, remaining vague in references to culture.

As a matter of fact, the report avoids defining ‘integration’ altogether. Instead, it relies on implications, which become rather clear in a quote from Chancellor Kohl: “We need our foreign guests...without guestworkers the present level of economic prosperity in Germany would be unimaginable” (1993:85). Furthermore it asserts a generally friendly public attitude towards foreigners, claiming in a survey that 94% of Germans condemn violence against asylum seekers, and 60% of Germans felt that the large number of foreigners in the country was no problem (1993:24). But, that means that 40% of the German population do think that there is a problem with foreigners, and since migrant workers are not asylum seekers, it says nothing about the acceptability of violence towards them. What is more is that it establishes a clear social hierarchy, not allowing the foreigner the elevated status of immigrant, but continuously affirming the status of an alien.

To clarify the position and the underlying distance from overt references to ethnicity and race, looking towards another group of foreigners that came into public view in Germany is helpful if . During the 1990s large numbers of migrants from the former Soviet Union and East Bloc came to Germany to settle, the so-called *Rußlanddeutsche* [Russian Germans]. They were known as *Aussiedler* [re-settlers]. The antecedents of this population arrived in Russia in the mid-eighteenth century, recruited by Catherine the Great (Mandel, 2008:67). Chancellor Kohl insisted a priority of his government should be to induce this population to settle, while deliberately avoiding the term ‘immigration’, since by definition Germany was not a country of immigration (2008:68). Then the newcomers were subsidized at an enormous cost.

The *Aussiedler* are not referred to as *Ausländer*, but are German within their country of origin, German as far as the German government is concerned, and yet foreign to many Germans. Nevertheless, they are returning ‘home’, repatriating and therefore in theory are not *Ausländer*, but possess the crucial criterion of being ethnic Germans. Hence, they belong in the fatherland, are marked as different by being declared Russian Germans, but are essentially German. They possess *Deutschstämmigkeit*, German kinship or heritage, which crucially differentiates them from the true *Ausländer* and makes them ‘belong’ to the fatherland. Thus, calling them Russian-Germans makes them a variety of German, entirely legitimate and thus able to claim a right to return, a right to belong (2008:69). In effect, this essentializes German identity. Due to the underlying ideology of essentialized Germanness, the *Aussiedler* are seen by some as a medium-term solution: “a welcome watershed of the ‘right’ sort of population increase” (2008:69). They counteract the dwindling birthrate amongst ethnic Germans at the same time as counteracting the increased birthrate amongst the Turkish minority. Indeed, they not only have a right of return, but alleviate fears of being taken over by *Ausländer*, by increasing the German population³⁰.

Chancellor Kohl specified three different areas in which integration assistance for the *Aussiedler* was necessary, namely German language-course, integration assistance and welfare support, and reimbursement for those who suffered in Soviet work-camps or prison (Mandel, 2008:70). He particularly stressed that the second generation needed to feel at home in Germany to put down deep roots within Germany. This clearer definition of integration and definition of status for Russian Germans is at odds with the idea of integrating *Ausländer*, establishing a hierarchy. The retention of German culture, which the law demands to grant citizenship to Russian Germans (Alba, 2003), privileges a group of foreigners who fit within the ethnic conception of Germanness, while veiling the very same conception by framing it in cultural terms. At the same time, the discourse used by politicians and government reports admits that ethnic German migrants are valued higher than foreigners, even if those are the second and third generation of labour migrants. After all, the Russian Germans possess the potential to shed their ‘otherness’ and lose the prefix ‘Russian’, simply becoming German (2008:70).

³⁰ The issues surrounding the Russian-German community have since proven far more complex, but it would exceed the scope of this thesis to discuss the experiences of Russian-Germans and integration.

The third position that Barbieri (1998) identifies is no less complicated, attempting multiculturalism on the basis of the state. Basically this seeks to remove the ethno-cultural inflection of German self-understanding, preserving the cultural identity of migrants, while giving them citizenship. Statemembership in this model is removed from ethnically defined membership within the German nation. This is what Brubaker (1992) calls ‘benign differentialism’ (1992:177), which goes against assimilation, attempting to guarantee the free practice of religion, language and culture. The idea behind it is that through naturalization comes integration and the ability to live together in a community.

In this third position, the idea of integration rests on divorcing culture from citizenship. That makes the state the unit of participation and integration culture is relegated to the private and individual. Drawing from the Berlin campaign (Mandel, 2008), the stress for foreigners is to adhere to rules and regulations, while the majority society is introduced to individual, identifiable foreigners with darker skin. While the former is reminiscent of the idea of how *guestworkers* are bound to observe the host’s rules, the latter covers a variety of issues. Placards and ads usually show an individual foreigner with dark skin interacting with a group of Germans. In this way, the fear of *Überfremdung* [strangers becoming the majority] is counteracted visually. Moreover it affirms an ethnic component insofar as the *Ausländer* is visible and identifiable as the other.

At the same time, the stress on high achievements, presumably educational and professional achievements of foreigners, as well as the pamphlets aimed towards ‘good citizenship’ are indicative of the sort of foreigner that is wanted. A ‘good foreigner’ is only someone who achieves highly and adheres to the rules. This position is close to the French model of the state-nation, based on civic rights and duties, and relegating cultural differences to the private realm, without addressing the underlying issues of ethnicity, while at the same time establishing clearly the sort of desired ‘good foreigner’.

The Frankfurt a. M. authorities on their webpage reflect this model. The city calls itself a “global village” where over a hundred nationalities live “peacefully side-by-side”³¹. However, living peacefully side-by-side indicates that these different nationalities do not live in the midst of native Frankfurters, but are expected to live peacefully next to them. This beckons the question what precisely the authorities mean by “peacefully”

and what happens if someone decides not to live peacefully. In this respect, two years before the change in citizenship laws, a criminal case drew attention to the issues surrounding integration and Germanness. While it didn't happen in Frankfurt, but in Bavaria, it highlights the pitfalls and complexities of German citizenship laws, integration policies and the consequences of the past fiction of the temporary 'guestworker'.

The *Fall Mehmet* [Case Mehmet] as it became known made the press in 1998. "By 1998, the Turkish juvenile (almost 14 years old) had committed more than 60 crimes like blackmail, theft, assault with bodily harm etc" (Bellers, 2003:1). The Bavarian state government decided to deport him. This decision caused a public argument between politicians and citizens in the media. Bellers (2003) claims that the argument followed "the known pattern: the Left lamented a human-rights scandal, and the conservatives saw order in Germany under threat" (2003:1). The problem was that the boy wasn't yet 14 years of age, meaning he wasn't criminally responsible in the eyes of the law. Several attempts to put him into care didn't work, and the parents had lost all influence on their son. The parents had lived in Germany for more than thirty years by that time, also received noticed that they were to be deported because of their son (2003:2). It should be noted that the argument for deporting the parents was legally dubious (2003:2).

At the time, the next general election was close, so the case became a political showcase. The Bavarian state government presented a law in July 1998, which would allow Germany to deport juvenile delinquents and their parents. The law never came into action after other states voted against it (2003:2). By October 1998 courts decided that the boy, known as 'Mehmet', should be deported because he was a "fundamental danger to public order" (2003:3). The parents were not to be deported. In the meantime at the pleas of the parents, the Turkish consulate declared Mehmet's Turkish passport invalid, causing the Bavarian state government to turn to the German foreign ministry for papers (2003:3). The foreign ministry refused, and answered that the Bavarian state government would have to go through the courts before the foreign ministry would intervene (2003:3).

In the end, Bavaria deported Mehmet, who on arrival in Turkey clearly stated that he wanted to return to Germany. In 2001 the courts finally decided that he could return to

Germany, since he was the dependant of a Turk formally employed within the EU, and EU law overruling state law guaranteed him the right to remain, provided he did not commit major crimes (2003:4). According to German law in 1998 the case was legally sound, but it was nonetheless a scandal that sparked a heated debate in the public and media, and called into question Germany's laws on naturalization and German self-understanding. The Munich city council initially opposed Mehmet's deportation on the grounds that "it would do nothing much, since he knew Turkey only from holidays and he was factually, if not legally, German (2003:2)". But in the meantime one of the civil servants had begun the process of deportation for Mehmet and his parents, and the general public approved of his strict measures (2003:2). While Mehmet eventually returned and the laws regulating naturalization changed, what is important is that the general public approved not only of his, but also of his parents' deportation. Certainly not everyone did, but since then "Mehmet has become the synonym for a rebellious, violent and *unintegrable* youth, the code for the state's impotence in handling *foreign* serial criminals³²", writes the German newspaper *Die Welt*³³ in 2005. "Mehmet" is synonymous with 'bad foreigner', someone who cannot be 'handled' and cannot be integrated. He is not one of the peaceful people the Frankfurt authorities imagine living next to other Frankfurters in a global village. And the public largely approved of deporting him to Turkey, a country he barely knew.

'Turk' has come to be synonymous with *Ausländer*, foreigner, and outsider (Mandel, 2008:91). In present times the Turkish minority numbers roughly 2.5 million (Mandel, 2008). After the end of recruitment of guest-workers in 1973, only the wives and families left behind in Turkey by the guest-workers were allowed to migrate to Germany for the purpose of reunifying families. Within the public consciousness, the more a group is perceived to transgress norms, symbols and values of German society, the lower it is placed on the hierarchical ladder, and Turks occupy the lowest rung.

In her work on Turks in Germany, Ruth Mandel (2008) uses Kreuzberg in Berlin as a prime example for this transgression to illustrate the hierarchy within which migrants move. It is known as a Turkish enclave, and thus – being a community and not based on individuals interacting with a German minority- already goes against the 'co-existence

³² My italics

³³ http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article673954/Nicht_bewaehrt_Mehmet_setzt_seine_Gerichtsserie_fort.html

position' (Barbieri, 1998). Kreuzberg is "a very powerful symbolic domain despite and because of actual social marginalization of Turks (Stallybrass and White, 1986:24)".

It is both demonized and idealised, within the German imaginary it is the enactment of a dangerous world, which exists outside all German rules and regulations, where the unthinkable might occur (Mandel, 2008:90). Kreuzberg, in the public's imagination, is Anatolia outside of Turkey, where 'Turks might slaughter sheep in their bathtubs, without a butcher's licence, girls might be kidnapped, forced into arranged marriages against their will; daughters and sisters could be beaten, even killed for violation of the sexual mores of their brothers and fathers: Islamic fundamentalist rage could shock this ostensibly secular society; sectarian violence could erupt, transposed from eastern Anatolian civil wars (2008:90).' Here, bread and pork-free sausage can be purchased in Turkish shops, and one can live without speaking German. Thus Kreuzberg stands for all that is foreign and dangerous, and all that cannot be integrated.

Sen (1992) argues that since the beginning of work migration, divorced from real contact, native Germans have internalized a relatively negative image of the Turkish minority; because they are the largest group of migrants in Germany and have a different religious and cultural origin, which means a kind of otherness, which many natives meet with hostility. European guest-workers were seen as more integrable within German society, considered to be sharing the basic Christian heritage and values. Within the Christian space, according to Mandel (2008), there is an internal classification of high and low by means of which Italians, then Greeks and Christian (former) Yugoslavs are ranked. Italians dominate the top of the pecking order, sharing the Catholicism of part of the German population, while at the same time their heritage is solidly European, including the opera, Renaissance, the pope etc (2008:91). Greeks, though Christian, are exotically inflected as Eastern Orthodox and their culture is considered less accessible to Germans, but distant and different in terms of social, cultural and physical proxemics (2008:91). Thus, the less accessible a cultural group is deemed, the lower it is situated in the hierarchy of migrants.

However, within Germany, foreigners reproduce and thus reinforce the idea of a hierarchy of foreigners, and internalize it. Bourdieu (1984) describes this process:

"Dominated agents, who assess the value of their position and their characteristics by applying a system of schemes of perception and appreciation

which is the embodiment of the objective laws whereby their value is objectively constituted, tend to attribute themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused (1984:471).”

In other words, migrants reinforce the German-assigned attributes of anti-social, anti-integrative and criminal, and in particular the Turkish minority that is considered the least ‘integrable’. ‘Good foreigners’ are those who assimilate and live up to German expectations. They are the highly achieving individuals of the Berlin campaign, whereas the Turkish minority is perceived as a group that is alien, inaccessible and under-achieves.

But, places in the more academic secondary school, the Gymnasium, commonly have been directly or indirectly refused to Turkish children. Many Turkish parents knew little about the German system and were in no position to help their children. That meant, that in effect, they conspired with the educational authorities to deny their children the necessary tools to assure their future, social, educational, and vocational, and thereby their children’s success in Germany (Mandel, 2008:92). Again, this reinforces the perception of Turks as the perpetual outsiders to mainstream middle-class society, making Turks and Turkishness inherently bad and resistant to German attempts at helping integration. Based on the idea of the desired and ‘good foreigner’, who is a highly achieving individual, whose culture is accessible and not too alien, the Turkish minority is constructed as the ‘bad foreigners’. And the second generation, and by now the third generation, are still considered Anatolian peasants, highlighting the importance of class and achievement again, by implicating that they are ill-educated.

According to Polat (1997), much has been written about conflicting cultures and value systems that migrant children need to negotiate, leading to inevitable identity crises, especially amongst the children. Having an identity crisis is considered an inevitable fact amongst migrant children, which is reinforced or begun in the parental home where ‘retrograde’ life concepts and educational methods prevail. Such ideas were reflected in the German media, but gained immediacy when civil unrest broke out in French suburbs in the autumn of 2005. Comparisons were made between the situation of migrants and in France and migrants in Germany, and particular attention focussed on the issue of migrant children and integration.

For many years German integration policies or lack thereof, have been criticized, while the French policies were praised for a long time. Back in 1998, for the anniversary of “30 Years Migration to Germany”, the French model of addressing the issue of migration was still praised. “We [the Germans] are precisely therefore too little hospitable and capable of integration because we deny our identity as a nation with a culture. From not denying, however, realistic requirements (in France and England accepted without asking) arise of the guest-worker and the asylum seekers that are to be integrated (Heinrichs in Koschik, 1998:31)”. By this, Heinrichs (1998) means that Germany needs to admit to its own culture and clarify its own identity, instead of denying it. He takes France and the United Kingdom as an example, which he considered assured in their own identity and culture, hence having a clear guideline for what migrants need to be integrated into. This approach is not nearly as straightforward and unproblematic as Heinrichs (1998) imagines. Stolcke (1995) argues that the discourse on culture in integration veils the true underlying issues, and shifts the responsibility for integration to the migrants (cf, Selim, 1997:127).

Nonetheless, some authors (like Heinrichs, 1998) and the media considered French integration policy superior. So when the *banlieues* [suburbs] caught fire in a climate that was already sensitized to the question of migration, the media increased its attention. The unrests began in a suburb of Paris mainly inhabited by migrants and spread across France, till the State declared a state of emergency to put an end to cars burning every night and fights between youths and the police. “Germany doesn’t have French conditions in this country yet”, the newspaper *die Zeit* (46/2005) subtitles an article about the possibility of civil unrest in German cities with large migrant minorities. The article tries to warn about ghettos and draws comparisons between Berlin-Neukölln and Aulnay-sous-Bois in Paris, saying that Berlin-Neukölln isn’t “as far advanced yet”, but one may fear that it might get to that stage.

However, while attention to integration was increased, while a new vocabulary arose, the helplessness of politicians to provide viable answers is highlighted in an emphasis on rhetoric and the peculiar absence of definitions. Erdogan calls on Turks to integrate more, *der Spiegel* writes on the 6th of November, 2005, reporting on the Turkish Premier’s visit to Germany. “In Germany, the Turks should integrate better into society,” he is quoted as saying. Yet Erdogan too, remains silent on what integration

means and how exactly the Turkish minority should integrate themselves. Again, it seems to make integration the Turks' problem, not of German society and German government policies.

Another article, written in the wake of the civil unrest in France asks whether in Germany offers for integration are enough (Die Zeit, 49/2005.). In a whole series, *Die Zeit* laments the rise of *Paralellgesellschaften* [parallel societies], which have already evolved, in which Germans and migrants live apart. But is that not what authorities like Frankfurt's want: a peaceful 'side-by-side' of nationalities?

Anatolia is only a tram-stop away, *Die Zeit* (48/2005) titles another article, indicating that in Berlin this scenario of segregated societies is already happening. In short, in 2004/2005 the public discourse changed and acknowledged that serious problems might arise from the Federal Republic's former migration policy, problems which had been largely ignored. While voices even before called for a change in the handling of migration issues, attention was focussed outwards on France, for example, for inspiration. What followed was an on-going discourse of helplessness in which words such as 'integration' and the spectre of *Paralellgesellschaften* were used to attempt solutions. The co-existence position, based on the French model, appeared to have failed, and the praised French example no longer offered solutions.

In fact, the unrests in France, and the helplessness of German politicians highlighted the lack of a definition of integration. What had begun as the vague implication during the Chancellor Kohl- era, and had then been defined on an individual level of high-achieving 'good foreigners' who took on German values and participated in civic society, was shown to be insufficient and revealed the underlying issues. This was by no means a new phenomenon however the discourse on 'culture' and 'co-existence', which attempted to move away from ethno-cultural perceptions of 'Germanness' by veiling the same, can be further illuminated by looking at the media, and the way foreigners are described.

Comparing different newspapers in Frankfurt, Diederich (1997) found that crimes committed by foreigners were reported much more dramatically, thus increasing the perception of *Ausländerkriminalität* [rate of crimes committed by foreigners] as a societal problem (1997:138). Nationality and ethnicity, according to Diederich, feature

strongly in crimes committed by foreigners or such that are perceived as ‘foreign’, whereas in the few instances, where German nationality is named specifically, it is to underline the outlandish nature of the crime, e.g.: “German Dracula bit old age pensioner- dead (F.A.Z, 06.04.1995)” (1997:137).

The difficulty and ambivalence of reporting on crime using stereotypical labels of criminals as foreigners, for Diederich, presents itself in a headline of the newspaper *FNP*: “Having come to Germany at the age of fourteen already, he speaks excellent German and presents himself in a self-confident manner (15.04.1995)”. According to Diederich the reinforcement of stereotypes in the media creates a false awareness of the crime rates amongst foreigners and only increases hostility towards foreigners, when suspects or perpetrators belong to the second or even third generation of migrants, in which case labelling them as ‘Frankfurter’ would be more fitting (1997:138). Whether or not such a new label would help changing the perception of criminal foreigners, Diederich (1997) rightly points out the importance of language skills, and the associations made with them.

Lack of fluency in German is a focal point for the media and public discourse about migrant children, especially the Turkish minority. The images are mainly negative images of migrants and migrant children, who are perceived as badly educated, criminal, lazy, and incapable of speaking sufficient German. “Why education? They live in Germany as would in their rural world”, *Die Zeit* (48/2005) writes. It describes “traditional Muslim- Turkish culture” as unchanged, concluding that ‘life continues as it has over the centuries’. According to the author, Turkish migrants in Germany “live according to the rules of an Anatolian village”. Here, tradition, backwardness and the oppression of women go hand in hand with a lack of ‘*Bildungswillen*’ [the will to become educated]. Where the education of women is immaterial since the parents believe that the girl will marry aged 16, integration fails and the system of traditional patriarchy continues, disallowing the Turkish minority to enter into ‘modernity’. Perhaps not oddly, but uncomfortably, the discussion about education and the perceived lack of will on the part of the Turkish migrants, seems to hark back to older ideas about the intelligence of different races, as outlined by Fischer (1913/1961) about the “Rohoboter Bastards”. Although in this case, lack of education, indicating a lack of intelligence, is constructed as a personal shortcoming and character-flaw. It is

backwards, refusing to participate in the blessings of modernity, thus showing a decided lack of intelligence.

In this article, as in others, the fact that women came after men, came to Germany as wives and mothers primarily rather than workers, led to Turkish being the language in homes and the affirmation of Muslim values. This, coupled with religious and traditional ideals amongst Turkish migrants, creates difficulties for the wives of migrant workers who came to Germany following their husbands, and consequently for the children. According to Atabay (1998), writing about the second generation of Turkish migrants in Germany, when couples migrate, the phenomenon of “pioneer migration” (1998:62) has a direct impact on the couple, meaning that whoever migrated first has an advantage with regards to learning the new language. Atabay (1998) quotes one woman as asking why she should learn German, when they [she and her family] had Turkish friends (1998:63). Various, the media focuses on the inability of migrant wives to speak German and the perceived consequences of limiting successful integration for entire families, as well as lack of educational success for the children. The above article in particular uses the imagery of the ‘Anatolian peasants’, saying that the “farm workers without land and work, who took their customs first to Istanbul and then to Germany [...] held fast to what was left to them- after they found they were the losers of economical development whether in Istanbul or Iserlohe- their traditions, and increasingly their faith with its stern rules for life and an Islamic belief in submitting to their fate”(Die Zeit, 48/2005). The Turkish minority hence is defined as backwards, criminal and refuses to adapt to modernity, i.e.: Germany. Recently, particularly the phenomenon of ‘honour killings’ has captured space in newspapers, and fired the public’s imagination, portraying young Muslim or Turkish women as the oppressed victims mainly of their backwards brothers, who refuse to adapt to modern, German ideas about gender equality. The position of women has become a key issues in making Turkish difference.

In November 2000, Member of Parliament Friedrich Merz defined German *Leitkultur*³⁴ in three basic elements: German language, constitution, and the position of women (Schuhmann in Kavoori and Fraley, 2006:96). Equally pointing towards the treatment of

³⁴ The idea of *Leitkultur* comes from political science, and refers to a societal consensus on values. Hence it is the ‘leading culture’.

women, politician Günther Beckstein said: “For me, leading culture is that there won’t be a minaret in a Bavarian village and that Turkish women in Germany have at least as much say as their husbands. (2006:97)”. Beckstein is openly talking about oppressed Turkish women who serve as a gendered and ethnicized boundary marker that are not and never will- due to their static mentality/culture- be part of the German national collective. Turkish men are perpetually conceptualized as uncivilized, constantly partaking in sexist behaviour, and placed in opposition to real German men, whose modernity and enlightened thinking would never allow them to treat women that way. If the “treatment of women [...] became the primary litmus test to determine whether foreigners- and especially Turks- possessed the capacity to function effectively within a Western liberal democratic society (Chin, 2007:143)”, then the Turkish minority- in the eyes of the majority society- has failed.

Even liberal newspapers reinforce the idea that the Turkish minority doesn’t want to integrate, refuses to arrive in German modernity and prefers to continue living in Anatolian villages. These groups of Anatolian villagers are the epitome of the ‘bad foreigner’ who is ill-educated, doesn’t respect laws on equality, refuses to adopt German values and is criminal, while treating women badly. Turks and Turkishness are perceived as ‘too different’ to integrate, while at the same time the ‘integration debate’ ignores the underlying ethno-cultural implications of what it means to be German. Integration in Germany means more than adhering to the rules and achieving, but actually demands assimilation and inherent Germanness that the *Aussiedler*³⁵ [resettlers] already have. Those who are not ethnically German, but who adapt and achieve can be awarded the status of ‘good foreigners’. Diametrically opposite to this is the ‘bad foreigner’ who is not an individual, but recognizable as part of a community, who has not achieved highly in education and profession, and who does not adhere to the rules. For them, the stress in the debate remains on the word *Ausländer*, informed by ethno-cultural notions of what it means to be German, and who cannot be ‘good’ by the above definition. This establishes a hierarchy of migrants, at the bottom of which are the ‘bad’ foreigners who are ‘too different’ and ‘unintegrable’, transgressing German norms (Mandel, 2008:87), which render them more alien than the other *Ausländer*. In Germany, these ‘bad’ foreigners are the Turkish minority, who “when scarves cover their heads, when they read Turkish newspapers on busses, send children to Qu’ran

³⁵ Cf chapter 3

school, smell of garlic or refuse to eat pork [...], they become *Ausländer*” (2008:87). However: the operative word remains *Ausländer*, someone who doesn't really belong, whether good or bad.

I will look again closely at these issues in chapter 6 “The Good Foreigners”, having tried to outline the discourses surrounding migrants, gender and integration in Germany here. These discourses regulate access to ‘German identity’, creating the framework that migrants and second generations negotiate in the process of identity formation.

3.5. *Gastarbeiterkinder*- Literature and Media Representations of Second-Generation children in Germany

Literature and representations in the media about the second generation of German-Koreans tend to portray a success story of integration. I will explore this seeming success story in greater detail in chapter 6 “The Good Foreigners”. In this section, I am looking at the way second generations in Germany are represented and discussed. Attempting to give an exhaustive overview would far exceed the scope of this thesis, so I am focussing on general approaches, with special attention to the *kyopos*. Literature about the *kyopos* is sparse. Mostly they are mentioned by the by in books or articles pertaining to the first generation (cf Lee, 1991; Han, 1991; Yoo, 1991; Yoo, 1996; Beckers-Kim, 2005 etc). Or they are mentioned briefly in research on second generation migrant children in Germany (cf Trommsdorf, 2001; Röhr-Sendelmeier & Yun, 2006 etc). Compared to a wealth of work on the second generation of German- Turks, literature about or by the second generation of German- Koreans is almost non-existent. Hence, I explore the broader discourse in which the few available sources are situated.

I argue that literature and media representations in the past problematised second-generations in Germany, building onto an ethno-cultural understanding of Germanness that dichotomized ‘Germanness’ with ‘Foreignness’; this approach situated second generations between cultures leading to a discourse of culture conflict and identity crisis.

In spite of the repeated claim then that Germany was not an immigration country, it had become one, but was retaining the concept of ‘guest’-labour, rendering migrants and their children permanent guests. Such reasoning had the potential to create difficulties, as W. Bodenbender, senior civil servant in the Federal Ministry of Labour pointed out in 1976, three years after the recruitment stop of foreign labour:

“A special problem arises with respect to the second generation of foreigners, a number of whom will remain permanently in the Federal Republic. This coming generation, because they have grown up in Germany, will react differently than their parents to the limited educational and occupational opportunities and social declassifications [...]. The second generation of foreigners will compare their own social and economic opportunities with that of the German population and interpret the unsuccessful social and occupational integration for what it is: unsupportable discrimination.” (Quoted in Wilpert, 1977)

Bodenbender pointed out the future difficulties that the second generation faced: In conjunction with the *jus sanguinis* that made naturalization for foreigners difficult. Temporariness and thereby dislocation became hereditary. In other words: migrant children who grew up in Germany remained ‘guests’, who in theory had another *Heimat* to ‘return’ to.

In 1977, Wilpert (1977) calls the fact that migrants stayed and raised families a “dimension [that] was unanticipated (1997:475). And “schools were ill-prepared for both the influx of foreign children and the resulting social and pedagogical challenge (1977:475).” In the 1970s notions of culture conflict and identity crisis were prevalent in studies on migrant youths, operating under the assumption that culture and values “are transplanted here wholesale, and are either taken up or refused by young people growing up here (Parker, 1995:11)”. Thus, there was an assumption in academia that migrant children inevitably would suffer an identity crisis and identity problems. Such notions used static notions of what constitutes culture and problematized individuals, who deviated from norms or didn’t conform to expected patterns. This approach situated individuals ‘between two cultures’, and constituted identity as a static and holistic concept that “you either have or totally lack” (Paker, 1995:14).

Wilpert (1977) reflects this static view and the perceived temporariness of guest-workers in talking about “mother tongue instructions” that “maintains the cultural identity of the foreign worker child; a factor considered important for the sense of self-confidence and cultural heritage of the child [...] as well as a practical necessity for the real alternative that at any time the child may be forced to reenter [sic] either the educational system or labour market in his own country” (1977:480). The *Ausländerpädagogik* [foreigner pedagogy] established during that time focussed on the educational achievements and problems, vocational training and transition into the labour-force (Worbs, 2003). At the time, the main concern focussed on the achievements or lack thereof for Turkish migrant children. Worbs (2003) identifies a

general problem with German discourse on migrant children: “there is an abundance of statistical material and literature about young foreigners, and there is an intense discussion, about for example, their comparatively high school drop-out rates. But this is often done without considering the generational status of the examined and the increasing number of naturalizations, especially among the second generation” (2003:1015).

Naturalization numbers have increased strongly in recent years, but categories in official statistics still compare ‘foreigners’ with ‘Germans’, which means that an increasing number of migrants and migrant children vanish from the public eye, causing a distortion. In an analogy, academic and public debates still compare ‘foreigners’ and Germans, as several authors have pointed out (Nauck & Diefenbach, 1997; Haug, 2002 etc). Worbs (2003) argues that this is important since studies have shown that migrant descendants fully educated in Germany and/or who have acquired German citizenship, achieve higher levels of structural integration.

The Turkish minority is often the focus of attention in academic literature, and in the public consciousness. The second and third generation is problematised, leading to a widespread perception of socio-cultural ‘integration deficits’ of Turkish second-generation migrants (Worbs, 2003:1016). Much has been written about conflicting cultures and value systems that migrant children need to negotiate, focussing on seemingly inevitable identity crises. As the first generation of guestworkers raised families, the question of identity for the children became of interest. Polat (1997) summarizes that ‘identity-crisis’, ‘identity-diffusion’ and ‘identity-confusion’ were the central topic in research dealing with the identity of migrant children (1997:35). In many studies the Turkish parent generation is described as ‘backward, traditional, patriarchal and authoritarian’ (Özkara, 1990; Lajios, 1991; Nieke, 1991; Heitmeyer, 1997). Having an identity crisis is considered an inevitable fact amongst migrant children, which is reinforced or begun in the parental home where ‘retrograde’ life concepts and educational methods prevail.

Often these concerns focus on their command of the German language, and their consequent underachievement in education. “Education and language, the politicians agree, are the keys to successful integration” (Hyung, 2008:139). In the German discourse on integration, the underachievement of young people of Turkish origin adds to a discourse on ‘unwillingness to integrate’. Many authors have attempted to address

this situation to provide a more nuanced image, especially of the Turkish minority (cf Polat, 1997; Atabay, 1998, etc). But the rhetoric in the media and public opinion doesn't agree with such a nuanced image. The media, instead, shows a preoccupation with the educational underachievement and the crime statistics of migrant children. For example, the newspaper *Der Stern* had a headline in 2008 stating that "Every fifth foreigner drops out of school."³⁶ Interestingly, the article appears in the category 'migrant children', so it is unclear whether they are only referring to legal foreigners, naturalized migrants or migrant children who may or may not be naturalized. This is precisely the sort of undifferentiated approach Worbs (2003) criticizes that still dominates the media and informs public opinions. Having said that, the media attempts critical approaches, writing about institutionalized discrimination against migrant children in German schools, like *Der Spiegel* in 2006, pointing out that teachers don't credit migrant children with the abilities to succeed³⁷.

German crime statistics indicate at first glance that migrant children commit more crime than those without a migration background. But, as the researchers point out, if one looks at family and social class, then the numbers of migrant children that commit crimes, and the number of children from a corresponding social class with equal education, commit the same number of crimes (Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen, 2009). "A constantly reproduced outcome of studies about youth-violence is the fact that youths of migrant descent (except children from Asian countries) commit more violent crimes³⁸," writes the newspaper *Die Zeit* about the crime statistics. The article focuses on young men of Turkish descent, saying how they want to "show strength through violence", but it is rare enough to find any mention of Asian migrant children in the news. Such rare portrayals show migrant children of Asian descent in a good light, or at least, as in this case, they are mentioned in passing as 'unproblematic'.

To a large degree, this reflects the existing body of literature in Germany about second-generation German-Koreans. Early studies focussed on pedagogy, and concluded that with a few exceptions almost all children of Korean migrants in Germany attended the

³⁶ <http://www.stern.de/panorama/migrantenkinder-jeder-fuenfte-auslaender-bricht-schule-ab-610347.html>

³⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/schulspiegel/wissen/0,1518,444160,00.html>

³⁸ <http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/13/jugendgewalt-migranten>

*Gymnasium*³⁹ (Kim, 1986:197). Clearly, Korean migrants, unlike their Turkish counterparts, did not and do not lack *Bildungswille*. In her study on Korean children in Germany, Kim (1986) identified several problematic areas: Parents and children disagreed about identity, with the children suffering from the fact that they were not fluent in Korean and their self-understanding as Koreans differed from their parents'. Another point was that the parents had different expectations for their children than the children, favouring a career that would confer status and pay well, preferably a career in law, medicine or business. Finally she found that the parents treated their daughters differently than their sons, and acted more conservative towards them. Kim (1986) concluded that the problems of communication between the parent and second generation weren't based on language differences, but on different ideas and plans for the future. Kim (1986) sees an immediate connection between language and identity, and concludes that the second generation children suffer because of their lack of fluency in Korean (1986:205).

Within the paradigms set by German discourses on integration, Kim's (1986) study of second-generation German-Koreans showed them as successful in German language fluency and educational achievements, but she pointed towards the influence of the German environment on the children's *Identitätsprägung* [Identity imprinting/development]. She situates the second generation between two cultures, and their 'suffering' is the direct outcome of the culture conflict in which they live. While Kim's (1986) study highlights several issues that are important for mine as well, her approach is limiting. It adds to the existent discourse about culture conflicts and identity crises. What is more is that the children she writes about are grown men and women by now.

Similarly, Hwang (1999) situates German-Korean migrant children between two cultures. Taking up the notion of 'culture conflict' and 'identity crisis', she assesses the passive and negative image of *Ausländer*, and argues that growing up and living in two cultures is a chance and an opportunity for positive agency that gives them an educational advantage. Beckers-Kim (2005) goes so far as to claim that 95% of the second generation of German-Koreans has achieved its *Abitur*- the examination that allows registration at universities. Literature about German-Koreans and the second

³⁹ Germany has a three-tiered school system, geared towards providing different education for different jobs. *Hauptschule* is geared towards manual labour, *Realschule* towards white-collar work, and *Gymnasium* towards higher education in university.

generation discusses the high level of female migrant education (Lee, 1991), and the continuity of harmonic parent-child relationships that produce mutual obligations and loyalties (Oerter/Oerter, 1995; Trommsdorf, 2001). The children of Korean migrants are presented as fluent in German, educated and integrated into German society. Reasons for this success are the stress on educational success and the educational ambition that the parent generation transmitted (Park, 1996).

What all these works on the second generation of German-Koreans have in common is that they are situated within the discourse on culture conflict and identity crisis, and from this approach argue the ‘success’ of the second generation as migrant children. That is to say that they support that discourse rather than offering critical insights, and challenging it. Also, they mostly focus on what the parent generation has done to bring about such success. The involvement of the parent generation cannot be denied. The parent generation’s experiences have informed my research as well, but in order to gain an understanding of the second generation’s self-perception and understanding, looking at the parent generation’s influences and the established discourse is too limiting.

In recent years, the second generation has begun representing itself. Literature is still sparse, but a few very active groups of second-generation German-Koreans are working on that⁴⁰. One representation is a 30-minute film by Cerin Hong that portrays second-generation German-Korean women in Berlin, narrating a “transit (Showcase Catalogue, 2005:29)”, meaning the “crossing over into the German society through and in the company of the traditions and values of Korean families” (2005:29). This film portrays the young women as neither accepted by German society as Germans, nor accepted in Korean society as Koreans, and shows them attempting to negotiate between ‘German’ and ‘Korean’.

In 2008 Hyung (2008) published a book about the second generation, called “*Lautlos-Ja, Sprachlos- Nein: Grenzgänger zwischen Korea und Deutschland* [Soundless/silent-yes, Speechless- no: Someone who crosses boundaries/frontiers between Korea and Germany]”. His account is mostly biographical, addressing various issues about growing up in Germany with Korean parents, while drawing on the voices of other members of the second generation too, to present a broader picture. His account assesses their present situation, especially in relation to integration and attitudes from the majority society towards the second generation, critically. He situates the second

⁴⁰ ‘Korientation’, for example, is one of these active groups.

generation in the dichotomy ‘Germany-Korea’ and the resulting culture conflict so that they “are not really at home in both cultures” (2008:139).

Roberts (2008) provides an - as of yet unpublished- linguistic study on the identity of the second generation, focussing on the use of terminology for self-description, advocating hybrid identities. She is addressing the question of self-perception, by analyzing the use of terminology on online forums, to provide an understanding of the issues surrounding the second generation. While she is challenging monolithic constructions of identity, her focus is on the acceptance of second generation German-Koreans into German society and considers being German as the “dominant identity” (2008:8) in a hybrid identity.

What this brief overview of existing literature and self-representations indicates is that discourses about the second generation of German-Koreans are firmly located in discourses on integration in Germany that dichotomizes ‘Germany’ and ‘Foreigners’, creating an ongoing discourse about clashing cultures and identity crises that is tinged with an underlying racial ideology. In this undifferentiated discourse, migrant children are expected to suffer an identity crisis, do badly in school and turn into criminals. The second generation of German-Koreans is an anomaly in this framework, seemingly ‘created’ as a success story by ambitious parents (cf, Hwang, 1999). I am using Hyung (2008) and Roberts (2008) mainly as sources, in an attempt to move beyond the established paradigms that focus on the parent generation’s aspirations for the second generation. What earlier literature has done is to create a ‘success story’ of migrant children that did not do badly in school and do not commit crime, trying to find explanations for that. Hyung (2008) and Roberts (2008) offer an approach that attempts a more differentiated view that does not play into an established trope of ‘good’ and ‘bad foreigners’, and identity crises resulting from essentialized identities.

I intend to further this approach, by moving away from essentialized understandings of identity, looking at the negotiation of identity, rather than reasons for success or failure. Thus, I consider my research as part of a larger body of work on the identities of second generations in Germany, and not restricted to German-Koreans. I aim to challenge a whole discourse on second generation migrant children in Germany that pitches a seemingly successful group against seemingly unsuccessful ones, and break out of dichotomized thinking that circumscribes the discourse on second generations in Germany.

3.6. Conclusion

“We called for workers, but humans came,” the oft-quoted Max Fritsch statement (cf, Chin, 2007; Mandel, 2008 etc) has long become a truism. The German state refused to acknowledge that it had become an immigration country a long time ago, holding on to policies and ideas about ‘return-migrants’ until it could no longer deny the truth. The debates about the policies and practices towards these settled migrants have persisted for many years. But discourses about integration failed to address the underlying issue of ethno-cultural German national self-understanding, and instead shifted the debate into the seemingly less problematic realm of the cultural.

Considering Germany’s dark past, and the atrocities that followed a misguided understanding of “race”, it is perhaps not surprising that the debate shifted into the cultural realm, but shifting the issue fails to recognize and address the true problems. In this cultural debate, the German state shied away from actually defining ‘integration’, leaving it open to interpretation what integration means.

Apparently, vaguely, it means education and proficiency in German. In 1977 Wilpert already wrote that “proficiency in German is an absolute necessity for these children (1977:481)”. ‘These children’ are adults now, the third generation is growing up, and integration still remains problematic. The German model of integration seems to be the one that Frankfurt am Main espouses: a peaceful side-by-side, rather than living together in a community. Basically that means that the ethno-cultural understanding of ‘Germanness’ need not be challenged, and the discourse on integration can continue on a cultural level, while the media vilifies ‘foreigners’ and ‘migrant children’ who are uneducated, violent and criminal.

Wilpert (1977) predicted that missed opportunities “can only lead to social unrest, deviancy and disillusionment among the majority of disadvantaged migrant youth in the future (1977:483).” Looking at the crime statistics of the Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen (KFN), her predictions seem to have come true. Although the KFN points out the parity between youths of the same familial and social circumstances, it would appear that violent and criminal migrant youths –considering the size of Germany’s migrant population- are disproportionally represented. And the

image the media represents is anything but flattering, feeding into existing stereotypes of ‘other’ men that present a danger. Education and language fluency do not guard against “discrimination, institutionalised racism and they do not blur ‘the sharp edges of ethnicities’” (Hyung, 2008:139).

But the *kyopos* are an unproblematic second generation for the German state and majority society. They don’t figure in crime statistics, speak fluent German and are educated. The majority society considers *kyopo* women ‘reserved and humble’ and *kyopo* men aren’t perceived as a threat the same way that Turkish youths are. They have fulfilled the requirements for integration. They are the model for what *Deutsche mit Migrationshintergrund* look like, literally.

While this relatively new term is meant to be inclusive, it is typical for the helpless discourse that refuses to take into account its structural racism. Seemingly trying to include those citizens who were possibly not born German, or whose parents migrated to Germany, it still denies full inclusion by pointing out that a particular German is not part of the national myth of shared blood and history, and therefore is othered. Such and other well-intended attempts, like the misguided studies about “*Negermischlinge*” in the 1950s, create the conditions for the prophesy of an eventual ‘identity crisis’. In practice, in everyday life, the term becomes even more problematic, since the majority society applies it to those who, as Stolcke (1995) put it, “carry their foreignness in their faces” (1995:8). In the current discourse on integration in Germany “phenotype tends now to be employed as a marker of immigrant origin rather than ‘race’, being construed as the justification for anti-immigrant resentment” (1995:8).

The ‘sharp edges of ethnicity’ are precisely what the German discourse on integration needs to address. Words like ‘integration’ and ‘multiculturalism’, are meaningless in a discourse that refuses to recognize discrimination and institutionalized racism, while blithely using words like *Mischlingskind* and *Neger*, speaking to those who are supposed to –somehow- integrate, signalling that they’re not members, and by virtue of phenotype never can be. In Germany, being an *Ausländer* is hereditary. And it is this discourse that creates “identity crises” and identity conflicts. Being ‘German’ with a different phenotype is not a readily available form of identification for second generations.

In chapter 4 “Yellow Angels”, I am discussing the particularities of Korean migration to Germany to provide the context for the present situation of the second generation of German-Koreans. Looking at the experiences of the first generation will contextualize the upbringing and experiences of the second generation.

4. ‘Yellow Angels’: South Korean women migrants in Germany

“We came because German hospitals needed staff, and we helped Germany. We are not economic goods. We will return, if and when we want.”

The above quote comes from a flyer handed out by Korean nurses in Berlin, in 1977 (Berner & Choi, 2006). That year the German state decided that the usual 3-year contracts for Korean nurses shouldn’t be renewed, forcing Korean nurses to leave Germany. By that time, many Korean nurses had lived and worked in Germany for many years and wanted to stay. In hospitals, they were known as ‘gentle angels’ or ‘yellow angels’, but in 1977, they decided to fight back. They demanded from the government that they should receive a *unbefristete Aufenthaltserlaubnis* [leave to remain indefinitely] after five years, and after eight a *unbefristete Aufenthaltsberechtigung* [right to remain indefinitely]. They collected signatures and protested, garnering support from the majority society for their plight. The local government of Berlin acquiesced to their requests in 1977. The last local government to acquiesce was in Baden-Württemberg, one year later. The Korean nurses had won the right to remain in Germany for themselves, their husbands and their children.

Today, the majority society is largely unaware of these events, and mass media when speaking of migrant women, follows the established trope of oppression of migrant women by migrant men. The first generation of Koreans in Germany does not fit into this narrative. Their stories are different, not least of all because they fought for and won for the right to stay, for themselves and by extension their children, and spouses.

These and the narratives about them among the second generation, form the basis of a narrative myth that is ‘the classic story’ among the second generation. While the migration stories about fathers can vary, it is rare that the mothers weren’t nurses⁴¹.

‘The classic story’ is part of the established narrative of shared experiences among the second generation, in which maternal pioneering courage and sacrifice, are part of the self-production of identity and community.

In this chapter, I will explore Korean migration to Germany, focussing on the women who came as nurses, using two life stories as examples. I will use these and other voices throughout the chapter to analyze. In contrast to the case of other migrant groups, Korean migration to Germany did not consist of mainly male migrant workers. I am focussing on the women in particular since more women came to Germany than men. Roughly 10.000 Korean women came to Germany, and 8000 men (Yoo, 1991:25). Statistically, and in practice the assumption that every Korean nurse married a Korean miner is wrong- many Korean nurses married German men or other Korean nationals who had come to Germany as students, after the first wave of Korean migration to Germany. That is not to say that the experiences of the Korean miners in Germany are negligible, since as a matter of fact their stories of migration have become part of a second-generation narrative that recognizes the parental pairing ‘nurse and miner’ as ‘the classic’. Nonetheless, I am focussing on the women’s lives and experiences as story that has had a greater direct impact on the second generation, as I will explain in chapter 5.

I will look at the particular circumstances of South Korea before and at the time of their migration, drawing out several key issues that contextualize the women’s experiences that constitute the narrative myth of origin among the second generation. Beginning with history, I explain the circumstances leading to migration, before looking at the constitution of religion within a Korean context, and the construction of gender and families. I then discuss the Korean women’s experiences in Germany and the present-day situation. I posit that the experience of gendered migration, which differs from the experiences of other migrant groups to Germany, puts the Korean migrants to Germany in a unique situation with consequences for the second generation. Korean nurses in Germany learned German much more quickly than the Korean miners, and had greater

⁴¹ None of my informants had a mother who had not been a nurse, but a few had fathers who had not migrated to Germany as miners.

contact with the majority society (Yoo, 1991:27-30). I argue that the particularities of Korean migration to Germany made the Korean community in Germany a “poster-child” for integration in a discourse that centres on the perceived backwardness and silence of migrant women. This particular position and the self-representation, and self-production of the first generation, form the basis of *kyopo* self-narration, and are part of the “memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” (Hall, 1989:71), which are used in the negotiation of identity.

4.1. Two stories of migration: Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak

Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak⁴² came to Germany together as nurses’ aides. They had both heard stories and seen newspaper adverts seeking staff for German hospitals. Both were young, and unmarried, both decided to migrate. And both still live in Germany. Mrs Kim came to Germany on November, 30th 1970 as a nurse’s aide. I met her via her daughter Johanna, and had the opportunity of interviewing her on several occasions in formal and semi-formal interviews. Mrs Kim always chose the venue for these meetings and always chose a different Viennese-style café, which are popular in Germany. Like many women of her age, she enjoyed sitting in these cafés, meeting with friends and chatting. Usually such a café is connected to a *Konditorei*, where cakes, chocolates and sometimes bread are sold, though the café is a separate room or rooms, usually large and airy with pastel-coloured walls, carpeted floors, landscape paintings on the walls and tables covered with table-cloths that reach at least halfway down the table. In the background, usually, discreet piano music plays from loudspeakers, intended to create a refined and cultured atmosphere, and the level of conversation remains a low, polite murmur.

Mrs Kim liked such Viennese cafés, not only for good coffee and cream cakes, or the elegant setting, but also because they stand for respectability and tradition. During the opening hours, which usually end around 6pm, such cafés are mostly frequented by elderly ladies, who meet and chat. The price of a cup of coffee (up to 4 Euros) ensures

⁴² Neither Mrs Kim, nor Mrs Pak ever offered their first names. I explain this below.

that the clientele remains select and great emphasis is laid on appearances, both in terms of the space and the clientele. Hence, a stained table-cloth in Mrs Kim's reasoning was a reason not to frequent a café again, or complain immediately, demanding another one. The clientele is, after all, not only paying for beverages and food, but for the setting as well, and appearances matter. Mrs Kim would usually attend such meetings dressed in smart casual dress: trousers, a blouse and a blazer, always wearing jewellery and lipstick, fitting into the setting and the dress-code of the other patrons neatly. She was a thin, elderly woman in her late fifties, with bobbed black hair that was streaked with grey.

Inevitably, she began the meeting, after greeting me, by carefully choosing from the menu, usually taking a good amount of time during which she ignored me completely. Being a generation younger than her, I wasn't supposed to interrupt this process, but wait patiently, giving her precedence when ordering and waiting till she addressed me. Mrs Kim inevitably only chose coffee, but would always encourage me to order cake as well, insisting on feeding me. "You're too thin, you have to eat enough. I know young people, my daughter never wants to eat properly either, but you can't work on an empty stomach, and you're too thin. Have you lost weight since I last saw you?"

Mrs Kim considered it her prerogative to feed me heavy cream-covered cake, using the advantage of age and the respect owed to her as being my elder, to establish the proper circumstances under which she wanted the interviews conducted. She created a set of semi-filial obligations in which she likened me to her daughter, showing care and reminding me that I owed her respect as a maternal elder. This set of relations was further exemplified in that she insisted on the proprieties of my addressing her as '*Sie*' and '*Frau Kim*', using the polite forms of address, while she would address me as '*Du*' and by my first name, as one normally does with children. Since it is improper for the younger to offer informal address, this pattern of talking remained throughout the course of my fieldwork, as Mrs Kim never offered informality. Like most of my informants of the parent generation, Mrs Kim addressed even her closest friends with '*Sie*' and '*Frau*', followed by the name.

The outward formality of the meetings as proscribed by place and manner of speech are both traditionally German and traditionally Korean. Formality in outward presentation of a place and one's own person is important in both contexts, as is the formal address

in speech, which exists both in Korean as it does in German. The importance of formal address towards elders in both contexts can be illustrated with two separate personal experiences. As a child I once accidentally addressed an older, retired German acquaintance with ‘*Du*’, which led to him to complain to my parents about my impoliteness. A similar incident happened with a visiting aunt from Korea, whom I wished a ‘good night’ in Korean one evening, having barely managed to remember what my mother had told me once, and the next day had my mother quickly teaching me the polite form since my aunt had been- in her words- mortally offended that a young person would dare speak to her so informally.

Sitting in the café with me, Mrs Kim was dressed in the generic uniform of Korean women of her age, consisting of a dress jacket in muted colours of brown and green, slacks and sensible flat-soled shoes with a spacious brown bag slung over one shoulder. She was giggling as she told me about one of her friends back in her younger days in Korea who dreamt of moving to the United States and becoming a lady in her own manor who wears ball-gowns all day. The image of the lady of the house who walks around in an evening gown is reminiscent of the Hollywood movies that Mrs Kim and her friends consumed when they were young women in Korea in the late 1950s and early 1960s, portraying a different life to the one they had experienced in the deprivations of war, which often came with hunger, hardship and resettlement, and the demands their families were making on these young women, who wanted to be modern.

One of the pictures she handed to me, showed her friends on a beach, all of them dressed in stiff, old-fashioned bathing suits fashionable in the 1950s, doing a *can-can* line with their right leg lifted just above the ground. It was, I was told, a very risqué picture for the time. Mrs Kim and her friends with their short hair and perms, and their swimming suits going on hiking trips and to the seaside, were indeed rather controversial for the time. They were modern young women who were exposed to Western culture through films in the cinema. She considered herself a very modern young woman, and black and white pictures indeed did show a rather perky young woman attired in fashionable 1950s clothes, which she told me, she had tailored especially for herself.

Mrs Kim said about Korea: “It was a dirt-poor country [*ein bitterarmes Land*] and I wanted to leave.” She would have preferred the United States, but Germany was “good

too”, and she knew about Germany from books, such as ‘Heidi’⁴³, so she was convinced it was a pretty place where she was going. “What a shock-it wasn’t like the book at all. But people did have pretty lace curtains in the windows! It’s funny thinking back on it now, isn’t it? Maybe some people weren’t nice to me, but I had only done one German language course, so I suppose that I didn’t understand them then. I used to carry a dictionary in my pocket all the time, and I think most people were nice.”

One of the first things, Mrs Kim told me at our first meeting, when I asked her to tell me of her personal experience of coming to Germany was that she came from a noble family, a *yangban*⁴⁴ family and that it had always been her aim to attend university, but lack of money had prevented her. “I was very studious and wanted to study at university, but my family was very traditional, and of course they supported my brother rather than me. After half a year in Germany, I was dissatisfied and wanted to go to university, so I asked around what I needed, but it turned out not to be easy. You need an *Abitur*⁴⁵, and you need to speak German perfectly, but of course it was problematic because of money too.”

Eventually Mrs Kim got married to a Korean miner and had a daughter, Johanna, her only child, but continued her education. “After working for twenty years in hospitals, I got a pretty good eye for the hierarchy. Unfortunately, I couldn’t study medicine, but I was made ward-sister, which is very good. I keep in contact with many of my schoolfriends from Korea, honest contact and friendship, one of them is a managing director in an old people’s home, another is a manager, one is a banker, one is a doctor, we’re still very good friends. I don’t regret not quite getting a university degree, after all that way I had time for my family, but I made sure that my daughter became multilingual. She speaks fluent French⁴⁶. For the first ten years, when she was small I only spoke German with her so she’d learn properly in school, but then I made sure she learned other languages, and she made a good *Abitur* and now studies at university.”

⁴³ ‘Heidi’ by Johanna Spyri tells the tale of a poor Swiss girl that goes to Frankfurt am Main in Germany to act as a companion to a rich little girl.

⁴⁴ One of the four social classes during the Korean *Choson* period, before the Japanese annexation in 1910. The *Yangban* were members of a – by 1910- hereditary class occupying important positions in state service based on the civil service examinations (Yoo, 2008:18). The education necessary to sit civil service examinations in the old Korean kingdom created the *yangban* class, whose status later became hereditary and also connected to land-ownership.

⁴⁵ German school graduate’s certificate that allows entry into university.

⁴⁶ Johanna speaks only a few words Korean.

Mrs Kim was very proud of her daughter and her academic achievements. “It wasn’t easy for us, financially. Both Mr Kim and I had to work full-time, but I wanted her to have the best [possible education, including a private school]. My daughter studies foreign languages and economics and something with IT.”

Mrs Pak turned out to be quite different from Mrs Kim though, although their clothes were similar, but Mrs Pak was taller, not as slender and kept her hair short and in a perm. Mrs Pak was a farmer’s daughter, who unlike the majority of nurses had not finished High School. She said she heard about newspaper adverts offering work in Germany to Korean nurses. “I didn’t really want to go, but I had brothers and sisters, and we were poor, so poor. So my father sold crops [meaning more than he would usually have sold] so I could go into town [Seoul] and apply. He was a good man, such a good man.”

Unlike Mrs. Kim, Mrs Pak didn’t have any romantic ideals about Germany. She stressed to me repeatedly that she didn’t really want to leave, but felt she had to, to make money and help her family, especially her brother, whom the family wanted to send to university. “I cried so much. Every day. And the German nurses weren’t nice to me. ‘Dirty Koreans’ they would say behind my back, and if in our halls of accommodation something was dirty, they would always accuse us. They were mean people. So I used to sing when I was cleaning on the wards, just sing and sing till I no longer felt so angry and frustrated. Dirty Koreans, hah. There were nice people too, but I always remember that.”

At the beginning of her career, in the early 1970s Mrs Pak earned DM 700 a month, and sent all of it, apart from DM 30 home. “We could eat in the canteen, and our accommodation was paid for, so I did not need much. But it was still hard, so hard. I was so homesick, but other Korean nurses lived in the halls of accommodation and we used to get together to cook together. We had fun and we laughed a lot, but some of the women weren’t good women. One nurse had a husband and children in Korea, but she would also go out with German men. Women like her gave us a bad name. They would go with the German men, but I didn’t.”

Visits to Korea were few and far in between, being expensive and the pressure to bring money and gifts to extended families making them even more expensive. But they made

German friends and were invited for coffee and cake, and Christmas. Mrs Pak and her friends were informally adopted by an elderly German couple that had no children, which later became the substitute or German grandparents for Mrs Pak's daughter. This wasn't an isolated incident. Many first generation women entered into such friendships with elderly Germans that they met on the wards of their hospitals.

Eventually, Mrs Pak got married. "I married a Korean in Germany [with whom she has a daughter]. Sometimes my husband and I didn't see one another for a long time, because we were working different shifts. We used to leave notes on the kitchen table, things like- please buy more rice, and such stuff."

Mrs Pak said she never qualified as a nurse because she didn't have the time. She stressed that she wanted to study, but since her father was a farmer without much money, all money went towards her brother's education, since he was the one who was supposed to care for his parents when they were old. She contrasted her own behaviour in caring for her aging parents by sending money, with her brother's who did not do his filial duty in Korea by caring for them properly. She asserted the value of having a daughter by saying of herself that to her own family, she is a daughter 'but like a son'.

Both Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak told me that these days, they regard Germany as 'home' in a sense, although both were reluctant to state this, stressing that it is 'home' because of family ties. Mrs Kim said: "Korea remains home, but I'm at home in Germany too, it's where my daughter is." Both of these stories highlight several issues that need to be contextualised to be understood. The economic situation in Korea after the Korea War, in the years before both women left requires closer examination. Mrs Kim's experience of Korean poverty contrasts with Mrs Pak's experience. While Mrs Kim lived in urban Seoul, Mrs Pak came from the countryside just outside Seoul. They both agreed that Korea was very poor at the time, but Mrs Kim experienced that poverty differently. For Mrs Pak migration was a necessity, while for Mrs Kim, it offered an opportunity.

Gender is another issue that requires close examination. Mrs Kim presented herself as a 'modern woman' who went against traditional Korean gender roles, and migrated to fulfil personal aspirations, while at the same time stressing her understanding of traditional Korean hierarchies that she transferred onto her present circumstances. Mrs

Pak was not a ‘modern woman’, but a good and obedient Korean daughter that migrated to help her family financially, and thus became ‘like a son’.

Their experiences of Germany differ as well. Mrs Pak was critical of her reception, and had experienced discrimination, which Mrs Kim dismissed. Underlying these narratives was the question of belonging that they both resolved by pointing out that their own families tie them to Germany these days, but that they still retain strong links to Korea where other family members, like siblings, nieces and nephews, and friends, still are. To fully contextualise these themes and issues, it is important to discuss the history of migration, the construction of gender and belonging.

4.2. ‘The miracle of the Rhine ought to be repeated on the Han River’: History and Korea during the 1950s/60s

In this section I am going to discuss the economical situation of Korea at the time when Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim grew up and left. I am going to explore the historical events that created the circumstances under which they migrated to Germany.

Talking with Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim in interviews, they always struck me as ‘typical’ elderly first generation women, who wore their discreetly expensive clothes as a sign of personal success, and enjoyed the status of Korean matrons from the *Choson*⁴⁷ period- being mothers to successful children. But while they enjoyed that image, and made me eat cake- their prerogative as my elders- it is interesting to note that the sort of café they habitually chose to meet were the Viennese-style cafés that are reminiscent of 1950s German movies⁴⁸ about the Austrian Empire, evoking images of ‘the good old days’ and unchangeable traditions. Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim were both teenagers in the 1950s and the ‘good old days’ these cafés evoke roughly correspond with the late *Choson* period. One could say that they utilized the visual reminders to evoke the feeling of a time and period in Korea that corresponded to the one portrayed in such cafés, and

⁴⁷ The *Choson* period lasted from 1392- 1910, and was named for the ruling dynasty.

⁴⁸ There is a whole genre of such movies, roughly falling into the category of ‘*Heimatfilm*’. These films gained popularity in Germany after the WW2, portraying a timeless, rural idyll of harmony and tradition, or the Austrian Empire in a stylized, harmonic fashion. ‘Sissi’- the film about the fictionalized life of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, is an example of that particular sub-genre. Manners, traditions and morals come under attack and are restored again. The Korean equivalent to such movies would be historical dramas playing in the *Choson* period.

contrasted and contextualized their own narratives about personal success, grief and emancipation.

Historically, Korea was known as the ‘hermit kingdom’ (Kitano, 1995). According to Kitano (1995) Koreans were known for their reluctance to travel abroad and the link between soil and ancestral homes as part of constituting identity. Angus Hamilton (1904), a British journalist, gives a snapshot of late *Choson*⁴⁹ Korea in his book ‘Korea’. He describes the Koreans as ‘a hermit-like people’, who at the time of writing had only recently opened their harbours to foreign ships and gained complete independence from China, having been a dependency beforehand (1904:8- 29). Since the *Choson* era is often evoked to explain ‘traditional’ Korean patterns of behaviour and social organization, it is worthwhile to briefly look at. At the time Hamilton was writing, Korea was a monarchy, and completely independent from China for the first time, but he notes that since then Japanese influence on Korea has grown (1904:10-11) and that Korea could yet be “incorporated, annexed, divided” (1904:14) by foreign powers.

Following the Russo-Japanese war (1904- 1905), Japan occupied Korea, and colonized it till 1945. The Japanese occupation and subsequent colonization ended the first tentative wave of migration from Korea to Hawaii. Until the time of Japanese occupation, roughly 7500 Koreans left Korea to work in Hawaii (Patterson, 2000). The period of Japanese colonialism had a profound effect on Korean national memory and self-understanding, which must be noted to contextualise the later discussion on gender. Historical discussions about Japanese colonization use a discourse of victimization. The discourse on the treatment of ‘comfort women’⁵⁰ uses personal tragedies as a narrative about national suffering and victimisation with women’s bodies directly being seen as representative of the nation (Kim, 1998). The underlying discourse is one of Korean men being emasculated by Japanese colonisers, reminiscent of the discourse employed in post-war Germany and the national memory of wartime rapes of German women by Russian soldiers. Memories of the Japanese occupation and colonization played a large role in Korean self-understanding.

⁴⁹ The *Choson* period lasted from 1392- 1910, and was named for the ruling dynasty.

⁵⁰ ‘Comfort women’ was the name given to military prostitutes, during WW2. The Japanese did not only draft Korean women, but women from other colonies as well, but Korean narratives focus on the particular Korean suffering, and in recent years former Korean comfort women have attempted suing the Japanese government. (cf Jager 2003)

After the Korea war, in the 1950s, South Korea's economic situation was typical of any resource-poor, low income, agricultural country with a per capita GNP of roughly \$82 (Lim, 2000:15) with one fifth of the working population unemployed. The government began paying attention to rebuilding its 'human capital base' (2000:15) in spite of a low per capita income. Educational facilities were greatly expanded and school enrolment increased by 265% while the number of college students increased from about 8000 to 100 000 (2000:15). It is interesting to note that while there were fewer female college students, Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, was the first governmentally recognized university in Korea, having been founded in 1886 by a Methodist missionary.

Korea, during the 50s and 60s was largely dependent on the United States, who considered it of greater interest to economically and financially stabilize agriculture and dampening inflation than to industrialize the economy. In 1964 president Park Chung-Hee visited Germany for the first time and 'the voyage left deep traces in Korean development: the German miracle of the Rhine (economic boom) ought to be repeated on the Han-river (Beckers- Kim, 2005:262)'. In his book, 'The Country, the Revolution and I' (first edition 1962), Park Chung-Hee, wrote a chapter about Germany, in which he concluded that while the Marshall-Plan was helpful in rebuilding Germany, the economic miracle on the Rhine was far from a miracle. 'I appeal to our countrymen not to regard the rehabilitation of Germany as a miracle, but a crystallization of the blood and sweat of 57 million German people', he writes, finishing off with the slogan for the economic development for his people to be: 'Diligence, humility and frugality (Han, 1991:127).'

Both the Republic of Korea and the Federal Republic of Germany had a vested interest in commencing diplomatic relations with one another. The FRG considered South Korea with its weak economy as a market for exports and a sphere for capital investments, and furthermore considering the political situation of the 1950s, had an interest in affirming South Korea's link to the capital market system. In the 1960s young Korean men and women began coming to Germany. Males were requested to work in the FRG's mining industry. Roughly 8000 miners came to Germany (Yoo, 1991:30). While Germany requested qualified miners, the fact that the recruitment remained in Korean hands- unlike other countries, like Turkey, where Germany opened its own recruitment offices- meant that corruption caused considerable problems: Due to bribes,

the officials mostly selected students, graduates and former white-collar workers (1991:30). The main reason many of these people wanted to leave was the economy and their lack of opportunities. Many of them were unemployed since the educational policies in Korea meant a lot of university students and few jobs for them.

Officially the recruitment of Korean nurses began in 1970 with a bilateral agreement between the Republic of South Korea and the Federal Republic of Germany, however unofficially the recruitment began in 1959 through the Benedictine Order, which sent missionaries to South Korea (Han, 1991:353). Thus, initially mainly Catholic converts came to Germany, yet soon enough German demand for more nurses caused the respective governments to regulate the recruitment through the *Deutsche Krankenhausgesellschaft* [German Hospital Society] and the 'Korea Overseas Development Corporation'. Recruitment, as with the miners, remained in Korean hands rather than in German hands, searching for both qualified nurses and nurses' aides. The latter position was open to women who had only graduated from middle school, which meant that much larger numbers of young women applied for this position, which didn't require a lengthy training. It also meant that more women applied than positions were available (Yoo, 1991:26).

4.3. How Kyung-Ja became 'Sister Clara'- Religion in Korea and its role among migrants

Having discussed the historical background of migration, and the economic circumstances, in this section I focus on religion. As noted above, the initial wave of Korean nurses were mainly Catholic converts, yet it will become clear later that Confucian thought played a decided role in the lives of the first generation, and by extension the second generation. In the previous chapter, I attempted to explain the hierarchy of foreigners in Germany, pointing out the difficulties of the Turkish migrants, due to religion. Talal Asad (1993) makes a compelling argument for Christianity as the founding principle of Western secularism, using the case of Salman Rushdie to show how deeply entrenched Christianity is. Christianity with its claim to the ultimate and only truth, and promise of salvation cannot encompass the possibility of other truths. Germany being a Western secular state, according to Mandel (2008), is

still a Christian space which problematizes non-Christian heritage, leading to negative implications for integration. Here, I attempt to explain religion in Korea, among the migrants and the continued role of Confucianism.

Kyung-Ja⁵¹ was my mother's name, a name her superior at the hospital found impossible to pronounce. But being a Catholic, my mother had a confirmation name, and thus became known as 'Sister Clara'. In spite of being a Catholic, my mother never stopped being a Buddhist, and occasionally would use a few Shamanistic rituals, when she felt that something had unsettled the 'nature spirits'. Like most members of the first generation, my mother had at some point converted to Christianity, and Christian churches continue to serve as meeting places for the first generation, who hold on to Confucian, Buddhist and in some cases Shamanistic principles and ideas.

Writing a little later than the arrival of the first missionaries, Hamilton (1904) explains some commonly held beliefs and superstitions, which I will briefly describe to illustrate the pluralistic beliefs prevalent in Korea. Hamilton (1904) describes how streams and mountains are imbued with personality, and even become persons or dragons, and how the mountains are home to 'mountain spirits'⁵², on whose altars the local people and passing travellers leave sacrifices to ensure their goodwill (1904:07-09). At the time of his travels, Korea experienced an influx of foreign, Christian missionaries, who immediately set about efforts to Christianize what they considered a 'godless' country (1904:226). The same mountains that are home to mountain spirits and dragons, were also home to many Buddhist monasteries, nunneries and temples. Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism, Hamilton writes (1904:226), were the main religions in Korea, although Buddhism and Confucianism were the religions of the upper classes.

It is important, for later discussions, to briefly explore Confucianism, and note how deeply entrenched its ethics were, and are in Korean society. Hamilton claims that at its core, Korea was a Buddhist country, even though as he notes, it "has fully accepted the ethical character of Confucius' teachings" (1904:234). Confucianism was the organizing principle of the state, brought in by the *Choson* rulers for its political, as well as social value, stressing the principle of filial piety as the basis of good government. Korean

⁵¹ Kyung-Ja is a Japanese name, not a Korean one, because she was born at the end of the Japanese occupation period.

⁵² These 'mountain spirits' are neither divine, nor are they intrinsically good or bad. According to my mother, they are however exceedingly beautiful, and can be seen bathing in streams in the mountains.

Confucianism stresses the ‘three bonds and five relationships’, which are centred on the filial obligations of junior to senior members of the family, and the state. It also particularly underlines social rites, roles and values, and the virtues of loyalty, mutual responsibility and hard work. (Pratt, Ratt & Hoare, 1999:88) As a moral philosophy Confucianism stabilized the Korean state for centuries, and remains at the core of many social practices and social structures, much like Christianity remains at the core of secularism. In *Choson* Korea, social structures and behaviour reflected Confucian principles, but the most popular rites and festivals were drawn from Buddhism and Shamanism (1999:88).

What appears contradictory at first to those of a Western secular mindset, used to religions that claim to be in possession of the one and ultimate truth, becomes less contradictory when considering that neither Buddhism, nor Confucianism, or indeed Shamanism, make such a claim. That is to say that it is thoroughly possible, while following Buddhism or Confucianism, to accept another faith as well, for oneself. Buddhism and Confucianism are philosophies that provide principles for life and personal enlightenment, rather than providing rules for eternal salvation. The Confucian values the Korean state propagated, are not in contradiction with Christian values. Christianity challenged Confucianism though. It arrived in Korea, in the form of Catholicism during the *Choson* period. Catholicism was outlawed in 1758 as an evil practice, because it threatened the authority of the king, whose state was built on Confucian principles (Grayson, 1985). Protestantism arrived after Korea opened its harbours, and ended its isolation in the late 19th century. Missionaries built schools and were a driving force behind women’s education. Christianity became an opportunity for women to gain an education. But while it had once threatened the foundation of the state, Christian values do not clash with Confucian and Buddhist virtues like filial piety, modesty, loyalty, dignity, hard work, mutual responsibility, etc. Significant vestiges of Confucianism remain within Korea, for example, many families still perform an annual kowtow to their parents to show respect, while companies stress the above mentioned virtues among their workforce (Pratt, Ratt & Hoare, 1999:88).

Equally, such vestiges remain with the first generation, who by and large accepted Christianity. According to some first-generation accounts, missionary efforts in post-war Korea focussed on children, and missionaries would offer sweets and other treats to

children for attending services, eventually leading to conversions. Once in Germany, the first generation used their churches for meeting places, as Korean migrants have done in Hawaii in the past (cf Patterson, 2000; Kitano, 1995). In Frankfurt, numerous evangelical Korean congregations existed, but only one Catholic one. Services were held in Korean, and the evangelical congregations often recruited and employed pastors directly from Korea. According to my second generation informants, evangelical congregations had a tendency to splinter or regroup, depending on various internal politics within the congregation. Unverified second-generation gossip has it that the Catholic congregation tried splitting, but the bishop in charge refused to allow more than one Korean mass. The point of this gossip is not to say that the first generation do not take their faith seriously, only to highlight the social nature of services, which are often followed with communal lunch for sociability.

However, there is little or no contradiction in enacting her faith the way my mother did. Buddhism and Confucianism do not clash with an inherently Christian space in the same way Islam appears to. Confucian values and virtues easily transfer into Christianity, and Buddhism with no claim to an ultimate truth, is not in competition with Christianity. The German majority society does not perceive Buddhism or Confucianism as a threat, but at worst as quaint Eastern philosophies. In conjunction with the overt Christianity of the first generation, Confucian virtues, such as working hard, fit into the discourse on integration well, seemingly being another point in favour of making the Korean minority in Germany more ‘integrable’ than the Turkish one.

4.4. ‘I was like a son’: Class, Gender and Family Structure

Having looked at the history of migration, it is clear that gender played an important role in Korean migration to Germany, and that women were in an advantaged position to fight for their rights in Germany. In this section I discuss the construction of gender in Korea, which is central to understanding the female second-generation’s self-understanding. Discussions about gender are usually closely connected to discussions about family, but in this case, it is vital to also look at class, to deepen an understanding of how the first generation raised their families, and the impact it has on the second. Beginning with class, I will then look at gender and families. Then, I will examine the

changing perceptions of gender roles and the effect this has had on the first generation of Korean women in Germany.

Mrs Kim repeatedly pointed out her ‘good eye for hierarchies’, which seems bewildering at first. But hierarchies and class play an important role in the way the first generation understood itself, and its aspirations for the second. *Choson* Korea had a hierarchical class system that influenced and informed the role of women, depending on their class. Thus, 19th century Western missionaries saw the lower class women having much more freedom in terms of dress and relations with men, which they interpreted as signs of personal freedom, and contrasted with the secluded lives of the women of the *yangban* class (2008:28). *Yangban* is the name of the educated male elite class of Korea prior to the Japanese invasion in 1910 (Yoo, 2008:18). While belonging to the *yangban*, i.e. administrative elite of the kingdom, meant nobility, at the same time, even though difficult to accomplish, it was possible to rise into the *yangban* class on the basis of scholarly merit in the early Choson period⁵³. Education was pivotal to social mobility, and the *yangban* class was the most respectable class one could aspire to. Women could be born into the *yangban* elite, but they could not rise into it on the basis of their own merit. The *yangban* elite dominated the court and military life, although being mainly bureaucrats. Although after the Japanese took power in Korea, the *yangban* class lost its standing and importance, even today many people in Korea are proud to claim *yangban* ancestry. The *yangban* may no longer exist as a class of influence, but traditional stress on academic achievement to gain such status persists, and is pivotal to an understanding of filial relations between mothers and children of the first and second generation respectively. In modern-day Korea, mothers still emulate the values of *yangban* families (Jager, 1988).

One could compare the *yangban* to the German idea of *Bildungsbürgertum*; that is to say, a class of intellectual and economic upper bourgeoisie, as compared to the petite bourgeoisie. Antiquated as the concept is, it still holds sway, implying not only superior education and intelligence, but also social and cultural refinement. The *Bildungsbürgertum* is the antithesis to the lack of *Bildungswillen* that the majority society often claims the Turkish minority displays. Mrs Kim’s insistence on her good eye for hierarchies indicates that she saw the similarity, and the possibility of upward

⁵³ By the late Choson period the class system had solidified and the possibilities for upward mobility were curtailed.

social mobility into a similarly highly regarded class as the *yangban* for her own daughter.

Within the traditional hierarchy however, such upward mobility would have been impossible to achieve by way of a daughter, only by way of a son. The basic unit of society in Korea was not an individual but the family, and its social order was 'filial piety'. According to Confucian tradition, Korean family values demand that children respect and honour their parents as well as all elderly people, and such values are strictly observed and deviations are frowned upon (Moon, 1999:112). Koreans did not have equal relationships between parents and children (Chung, 1986:234). The relationships of the family members were based on the duty of one-way obedience, on the part of children for parents and on the part of wife for husband. Likewise, husband controlled wife and parents controlled children. Women's status was inferior to men but once becoming a mother, the power of a mother over her children became absolute. Women were expected to deny their own interests and rights as they obeyed the codes without conditions (Chung, 1986:233); however the code that gave elders the right to be respected gave recognition to mothers (1986:234).

The master of the household, as Cho (2002) writes, was a distant and removed patriarch, whose role was restricted within the family context to being the head of the household. Recognising this, we can understand better the absence of fathers and husbands from female narratives about families. Within a framework that emphasizes the mother-child relationship above husband-wife relationships, husbands play a marginal role. In everyday life, Korean women wielded considerable power, but such power did not come from their status as wives, but from their status as mothers. A child's success was a mother's greatest achievement, transferring status on her. In this framework it is not a husband's academic or professional success that transfers status onto a woman, but the child's success. Hence, traditionally, married Korean women with children were generally known by the eldest child's name as '[name of child]'s mother' (cf Kendall, 1985). If a son succeeded as a high official, his mother also was given an official title (Chong Y.-S., 1973; Cho, 2002).

Men were subject to rules too and in the 19th century there were designated women's hours during which women could leave their domestic sphere for an outside realm of female sociability (Yoo, 2008:29). That meant that for an hour after sunset, men were

confined to the domestic sphere and subject to punishment, if found in the street during these women's hours, which were designated solely for 'Korean women to slip out and take the air, and gossip freely (2008:29). *Choson* society not only encouraged, but provided the means for women to form friendships and social networks in a sphere separate from men.

Gender roles and expectations changed during the time of Japanese colonialism in Korea. Cho (2002) offers a framework for changing gender roles for women in the transition from colonial-modern to post-modern Korea. She looks at three generations of middleclass Korean women, calling them 'grandmother's generation', 'mother's generation' and 'daughter's generation', which are terms she applies loosely. The grandmother's generation, she describes as 'born in 1920, come of age during the Japanese colonial era, and reared her family after the Liberation (1945). Women of this generation are described as "motherly women, the stronghold of the disrupted society" (2002:169). Their daughters would have been born around 1940, acquired her most vivid memories after the Liberation, and experienced the Korean War as a child. She would have reared her family during the period of Korea's sudden economic growth (2002:169), while her daughter would have been born around 1965. According to Cho (2002), these three generations have come to age within different ideological narratives for women.

The first generation of Korean women in Germany would have belonged to Cho's 'mother's generation', which was "exposed to Western culture through movies and television dramas" (2002:173). The women of their generation in Korea, according to Cho (2002:167), had insisted that they would not live their mothers' lives, but they did. They made their own identities through their children and distanced their husbands by accepting the distinction between public and domestic domain. Women thus continued to perceive the family as matrifocal, composed exclusively of mothers and children. In their hard work and aggressive devotion to their families, and in their lack of intimacy with their husbands, they were the faithful daughters of their mother's generation (Cho, 2002: 178).

While the first generation women wanted opportunities, they were still bound into the traditional family structures, and only economic reasons made it possible for them to gain permission. This reasoning is particularly pronounced in Mrs Pak's narrative about

leaving. Economic necessity was the driving force behind it. Achieving financial security gave her status in Korea, made her 'like a son' meaning that she fulfilled the traditional role of the eldest son in caring for her ageing parents. It was a matter of considerable sacrifice and pride for her that she, once 'only' a girl, had achieved such a position.

Certainly some of the Korean nurses that came to Germany were feminists, but most of my informants simply did not want to live their mothers' lives. They had grown up during a time of vast political, economical and social changes and had experienced education as an opportunity they were previously denied. Mrs Kim expressed some resentment that her parents considered her education less important than her brother's. 'Tradition' meant that her educated was neglected. She contrasted this with insisting that she was a modern woman- unlike Mrs Pak, who framed herself in terms of being a good traditional Korean daughter- showing me pictures to illustrate her modernity, and telling me about the Western movies she used to see in the cinema with her friends.

Modern as Mrs Kim was, it did not stop her from insisting on the traditional respect a mother and elder was due. By telling me that I was too thin, just like her daughter, she positioned herself as a figure of authority, while fussing maternally over me. And she repeatedly stressed to me how much she wanted to go to university, and how she even had looked into the practicalities. When her dreams of attending university came to nothing, Mrs Kim dedicated herself to supporting her daughter's education, despite financial hardships, ensuring that Johanna would receive the best education possible. In that, Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak were very much like Cho's (2000) mother's generation, who worked hard and were aggressively devoted to their children. But in a departure from Korean tradition, my two informants were known as 'Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak', rather than by their children's names. Cho- Ruuwwe (2006) says about meetings with her Korean peers⁵⁴ in Germany: "For example, we have started calling one another by our first names, because it is more neutral, which is not customary in Korea at all. There you will be addressed as 'Mother of XY' or 'Daughter of XY', with the person of reference usually being a male." (2006:27).

⁵⁴ Traditionally in Korea, even among peers the younger ones have to address the older ones in the polite forms, comparable to the German '*Sie*'. Addressing one another by first names is a departure from Korean norms. This does not mean that the second generation is free to address the first generation in the familiar form.

All of my informants insisted on being addressed by name, rather than identifying by their children's names. This assertion is a departure from traditional Korean thinking, in which a woman receives her status by way of bearing sons. As Mrs Kim repeatedly pointed out to me that she became ward-sister, rising as high in hospital hierarchies as possible for her. The Korean nurses were proud of their individuality and of having achieved something for themselves, rather than being known as their sons' mothers.

4.5. Arriving in Germany – Reasons for migrating, Language and Experiences

In this section, I examine the personal reasons for migration, initial experiences, and difficulties. Language plays a central role in all of these experiences, and serves to explain partly, later efforts on the part of the first generation to ensure that the second generation speaks fluent German. But these narratives also play a role in constructing 'the classic story' that the second-generation uses to constitute itself.

Reasons for coming to Germany varied. For some, economic considerations played the key role, for others it was an interest in Europe or the desire to live somewhere else for a while (Yoo, 1991:28). A sense of adventure certainly played a role. Some, like my mother, considered work migration the opportunity of a lifetime, to see the world.

Another informant's mother had vague plans for using Germany as a stepping stone to further migrate to the United States. Hyon-Sook Kim (2006) writes about her experience: "I had a friend then in the Seoul Medical Centre. She had heard from a friend of hers that Germany is looking for nurses and that one could apply now. For me that was surprising, because I didn't know about it. I couldn't really believe it. When I heard from different sides that you could really apply with the Korean Overseas Development Corporation, I thought: That's what I want to do. [...] It was a chance to lead a completely different life." (2006:129)

"What a chance!" writes Son-Im Kim-Morris (2006:43), "In summer 1963 I read an advert in a Korean daily newspaper. German hospitals want to hire trained Korean nurses. Korean nurses' training will be recognized, it reads. [...] That is *the* opportunity to go abroad, and to Europe of all places! Until now, I did not even dare dream of that,

because in Korea it is almost impossible for normal citizens to go abroad. I do not hesitate to apply [...] even though I know neither language, nor country.”

Many of the women came from the Korean middle class, who also wished to further their education in Germany. Mrs Kim was adamant showing me how modern she was as a young woman. Her narrative about wanting to leave Korea and to gain an education is similar to that of many others. Yoo (1991) suggests that these reasons indicate traditional societal pressure on women in Korea, which the women wanted to escape, making migrating to Germany an act of emancipation. Hyon-Sook Kim (2006) reflects Mrs Kim’s experience of parents devaluing female education : “For our younger brothers’ sakes, my four sisters and I have to waive higher education and many privileges in everyday life. Privileging sons, as customary in Korea, is accepted by the daughters as if it were natural. I too cannot even fathom to demand equal treatment.”(2006:42).

Mrs Kim, and the women cited above seem to have considered going to Germany partly as an adventure, and partly as an opportunity to improve their lives. They were modern young women who had gained an education and wanted to improve their lot, even if they knew little of Germany and had no language skills yet. Economic reasons cannot be discounted, though. As Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim pointed out, Korea was poor with limited opportunities, and as Mrs Pak said: “I didn’t really want to go, but I had brothers and sisters, and we were poor, so poor. So my father sold crops [meaning more than he would usually have sold] so I could go into town [Seoul] and apply. He was a good man, such a good man.” Being the eldest and having younger siblings, Mrs Pak considered it her duty to go, so she could send money home. She didn’t regard migrating as an adventure or an opportunity for herself, but a necessity, and an opportunity for her family for a better future.

Initially, contracts ran for three years, which caused problems in some cases, making it difficult to change from one employer to another in the case of dissatisfaction. Especially in nursing homes for old people, where mainly unqualified young women worked- the nurses’ aides- and the physical demands were high, women experienced difficulties in settling into their work. Language difficulties were another problem. Unlike with other guestworkers in the past, the German state provided language courses

for the Korean nurses, but they were insufficient and many women privately attended language courses (Yoo, 1991:27).

Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak, and doubtlessly all others, took a brave step in coming to Germany, in spite of knowing next to no German. Some felt liberated in Germany, but others describe the situation as aggravating and frightening: “I came to Germany in October 1970. Into a foreign country, without much knowledge of German. Suddenly, there I was like a child, like a deaf-mute, and made myself understood with basic words, gestures and a little English. To prevent myself from crashing and burning, I determined to diligently learn German. Otherwise, I would simply vanish in a foreign country without a trace!” (Berner & Choi, 2006:33)

Like Mrs Kim, others too carried around dictionaries in their pockets, but that was fraught with the possibilities for miscommunication. “Lots of misunderstandings arose, trouble, but funny situations too” (2006:33).

An informant’s mother recalled: “I am sure that sometimes people said bad words behind my back, but I didn’t understand, and I was friendly and polite, regardless. I was always friendly to everyone. Ward sister, I think, didn’t like me initially, but I was friendly and soon I had a reputation for being the nicest sister in the hospital.”

Unlike the miners, whose contact with the majority population during work hours was limited, the nurses experienced far more verbal interaction, due to the nature of their work. But language acquisition was far from easy, often fraught with pitfalls, and revealing of cultural differences. The same informant’s mother said: “I was trying to buy a newspaper, and saw one called ‘*Das Neue Blatt*’⁵⁵, so I had a mental image of a tree growing a fine new leaf. How poetic, I thought, and that the Germans were very poetic people to name their newspapers like that. It was such a hopeful image for the future. And then it turned out to be a glossy tabloid.”

The small instance is revealing insofar as the associations my informant’s mother made in this context, are none a native German speaker would have made, highlighting that while one can learn a language, it is far more difficult to learn cultural competence. Languages are full of concepts that cannot be translated easily from one into another.

⁵⁵ Translation: The new sheet. ‘Blatt’ or ‘sheet’ is a common name for a newspaper, but ‘Blatt’ can also mean ‘leaf’.

The first generation women I spoke to, expressed their frustrations with occasional inabilities to express themselves fully in German, saying that German is a too precise and business-like language, whereas Korean is more playful and better suited to expressing emotions.

“After our shifts, we used to sit together [...] We cooked Korean food and ate together. In Korean, we made fun of others. In Korean we talked about our anger and irritation every day” (Berner & Choi, 2006:33). Among themselves, the first generation uses Korean to communicate, although they say that their Korean is old-fashioned now, compared to the one spoken in Korea, and they often use German words, and phrases when speaking. Aware of their own linguistic limitations, which in some cases hindered further education, the first generation ensured that their children would speak German, and speak Korean mainly among themselves.

Cultural differences also meant that Korean women were at a disadvantage: in Korean society direct conflict resolution wasn't customary (Yoo, 1991:27), which meant that oftentimes the Korean nurses did not insist on their rights, leading to being disadvantaged or their German colleagues taking advantage of them. Mrs Pak appears to be one of the few who had openly bad experiences with the majority society, being called ‘dirty Korean’, but that is certainly not to say that there were no problems. Jung-Ja Peters (2006) reports with indignation how she was treated as a qualified nurse: “Matron was waiting for me. She was holding a bucket and a cloth, and when she saw me, she indicated into the direction of the toilets and pressed both into my hands. Without so much as a “good morning” did she vanish to eat breakfast. At that moment I had a hard time retaining my composure. [...] I took off my nurse's cap- the insignia of a qualified nurse- off my head and began scrubbing toilets” (2006:85).

Others report uncomfortable situations as well: “One day, while I sat in the canteen at lunch, a tall, handsome, blond medical student came to my table and sat down with me. He asked where I came from. When I answered that I came from Korea, he asked if people had enough to eat there. I flushed bright red, because for Koreans there is no greater shame than not having enough to eat. My poverty was embarrassing enough to me. So, offended, I turned away and left in embarrassment” (Park-Reining, 2006:57).

Compared to other migrant groups, the Korean nurses were housed in better accommodation, although even here problems occurred, for example in relation to cooking (Yoo, 1991:27). German nurses, living in the same accommodation, complained about the lingering strong smell of garlic, after the Korean nurses cooked together in the evening (1991:27). But, Korean nurses, like Mrs Pak and her friends, got together to counteract bad experiences and misunderstandings, and to fight their homesickness together. Cooking Korean food and getting together was an important link to home and everything familiar, and narratives about food are often used to highlight different issues such as a sense of displacement. Mrs Pak pointed out how difficult it was to buy Korean food, and many others of my informants echoed how very difficult it was to buy decent rice and chilli powder, which made it necessary to ask for parcels from Korea from their families. One of the prevailing memories concerning such parcels are not the food, but what German custom officials apparently did to them. Quite frequently, these parcels were opened and checked. Mrs Pak wasn't the only one who complained that customs officials slashed the packages their parcels contained, thus somehow violating and disrespecting a vital link to Korea. The indignation with which such tales were told, about spilled chilli powder everywhere, subtly underlines the ambivalence with which narratives regard Germany. The dreams of an opportunity and independent life met with reality in Germany, and the young women that arrived found that they were typecast and met with stereotypes.

Eating together created a sense of community and stalled homesickness, but it also served to reinforce Korean moral values and structures. Korean girls waited until their parents arranged a marriage for them, but some of the Korean nurses took matters into their own hands and met and went out with German men. The taboo on socializing with foreigners had applied only to women in Korea (Choi, 2008:05), and the idea that young Korean women could go out with foreigners was unsettling. Some, like Mrs Pak, thought badly of such women, especially the one she knew to be married, but implied that all Korean women who socialized with German men were giving them a bad name. It was a sentiment that the women who did go out with Germans or married them repeated, saying that other spoke badly of them (Berners & Choi, 2006).

The wide distribution of Korean nurses across Germany also meant that many had no access to the contractually promised *Sozialberatungsstellen* [social advice bureaus],

which effectively left the nurses in rural areas without a place to turn to (Yoo, 1991:27). Some Korean nurses did not even obtain a Korean version of their work contract, and combined with the lack of care and cultural differences, it is fair to say that the initial years of Korean nurses in Germany were hard and badly organized. Nonetheless, many stayed. The difficulties of starting over again on the Korean job market worked as a deterrent (1991:29). Work experience in Germany, according to Yoo (1991) was of no value for Korean employers. Furthermore the ages of the women that had migrated to Germany ranged from 18-30 years old, with the majority being aged 21- 25 years old (1991:28), which meant that returning women were aged between 24- 27 years old, and therefore almost too old for marriage (1991:29).

While recruitment for miners slowed down in the 1970s, the shortage of qualified hospital staff in Germany prevailed, making nurses the more valuable source of labour. But the economic crisis in the 1970s meant that the German states sought to deport guest-workers whose contracts had run out. Notably, the recruitment of Korean nurses and miners continued till 1977, whereas other guest-workers ceased to be recruited by 1973. Still in the late 1970s, after recruitment ceased for them, Korean nurses were faced with the possibility of being deported. According to Yoo (1991) no Korean nurse was deported, but some chose to leave in light of such difficulties. In 1978, after protests that began in Berlin, Korean nurses successfully gained leave to remain indefinitely.

By that time, many had married. Some had married German men, while others married Korean students studying at German universities. Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim each married one of the ca 8000 Korean miners, becoming the stereotypical couples of the ‘classic story’ of the second generation. Once they had children, the German education system provided another incentive to stay. Since schooling is free and universities, until recently, demanded no fees, a good, while also cheap, education for children was possible. That meant that not only sons, but daughters could have a university education. In the social hierarchy of *Choson* Korea that would mean that suddenly girls could rise into the *yangban* class, and even mothers with only one child, a daughter -like Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak- could gain status and standing. ‘Korea’, as the second generation learned about it, thus became an idealized image of the *Choson* period that lived on in Germany. And Germany, for the first generation, became ‘something like

home' as Mrs Kim put it. Home, but not quite. But having found Germans who would stand in as 'surrogate grandparents' for their children and through the links to Korean friends, that served as 'aunties' to one another's children, the Korean community turned into a familial network that to some degree retained the traditional structures, and in other respects was entirely new. Thus they fused together the old, and the new to create a kind of family life where "creative culture-building takes place in the context of external social and economic forces as well as immigrants' pre-migration cultural frameworks" (Foner, 1997:1), which I will explore further in the next chapter.

4.6. Conclusion

Although there is no such thing as a timeless tradition, immigrants may come to think of life in their home society in these terms (Foner, 1997:963). The former is the land of origin,

"constitutes a detour through the past enabling future generations to produce themselves anew and differently. It is a resource of history in the process of becoming more than being: not "who we are" or "where we come from", so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall, 1996:04).

'Traditional' Korea, Korea as my first-generation informants remembered, and my second-generation informants' parents transmitted it, derived much of its legitimation from the *Choson* period, the 'good old time' Mrs Kim evoked, albeit differently in the Viennese cafés she frequented. By the time the first generation left Korea, the country was in transition and modernizing, but the migrants took away an image of 'timeless tradition' that informed who they would become, and how they represented themselves. Providing a point of departure both figuratively and physically, Korea provided the foil for continuity and change.

The first generation broke with 'traditional Korea' by converting to Christianity, yet held on to Confucian and Buddhist values. They wanted educational opportunities for themselves that Korean traditional gender roles denied them, while still striving for *yangban* class. They changed the traditional focus on sons, asserting their own individuality and achievements, but still see part of their identity vested in their

children's academic success. And they asserted themselves, although direct conflict resolution was not traditional in Korea. But thanks to that, in 1978 the Korean nurses won the right to remain in Germany indefinitely, provided they had lived and worked there for eight years. They won that right for their husbands, their children and for themselves. Still, Beckers-Kim (2005) asserts that the immediate environment regarded Korean nurses in Germany as "quiet, diligent, gentle and a little exotic" (2005:192).

Berner & Choi (2004:13) claim that the majority society called them 'gentle' or 'yellow angels', one relating to the perceived 'gentleness' of Korean women, and the other referring to phenotypical appearance. But angels are not human. And these angels are specifically called 'yellow' for the alleged colour of their skin, so while seemingly benign, this piece of remarkable racism from the German press, reduced Korean nurses to outlandish, selfless, dependent creatures, whose only purpose it was to help. Another headline from 1978 shows more of this sort of patronizing kind of representation in the media. 'The gentle angels have sorrows' the newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* titles on the 22.03.1978, referring to the protests of Korean nurses against planned deportations. It elicits the image of gently weeping angels that suffer their sorrows quietly. In fact, the Korean nurses were angry and demanding what they considered their right. The image of the emancipated Korean migrant woman in Germany does not fit easily into debates about migrants in Germany. As a matter of fact it is something of an oddity. Traditional Korean society was patriarchal and oppressive for women, but as I hope to have shown, it also offered opportunities for women to gain power and assert themselves. The Korean nurses in Germany negotiated their position, mediating between traditional Korean gender roles, and their individual aspirations as 'modern' women. Their success, the stories of hardship, sacrifice and drive to rise through the hierarchies, which Mrs Kim identified, create the basis for the narratives of self-production for the second-generation.

"Pioneers" is a word my informants often used, to speak about their mothers, expressing their admiration. One informant drew a comparison with the diving women of the Korean island of Jeju⁵⁶, who resisted the Japanese during the occupation period, and the first generation women, calling them 'heroines'. The comparison is an interesting one, since the women of Jeju, the *Haenyo*, were known for their independence, being the

⁵⁶ The diving women of Jeju harvested marine algae and shellfish, going as deep as 20m without modern equipment.

heads of their households and the fact that daughters were prized higher than sons, since only women dived⁵⁷. Alas, according to Gwon (2005), the historical reality of the *Haenyo* was that due to class restrictions, their status was and remained low, they were often exploited by merchants and discriminated against, before the end of the Korea war. The myth of independent, economically successful women however, fits the first generation narrative of self-representation better, positioning them in a tradition of brave and successful women, and by extension, their daughters. It also serves to differentiate, and elevate the first generation women within the hierarchy of migrants (Mandel, 2008); if not in the eyes of the majority society, then within the women's narratives and the eyes of their own children. The story of the first generation is "a resource of history in the process of becoming more than being: not "who we are" or "where we come from", so much as what we might become" (Hall, 1996:04).

In Chapter 5, I will explore the self-understanding of the second generation, by looking at the dynamic character of relations between the first and the second generation; looking at the way values were transmitted, and which values were transmitted, and whether they changed.

5. "You have to have Korean parents to know what I mean": *Kyopo* women, continuity and change

"Many German-Koreans [meaning the second generation⁵⁸] are assimilated so far that they have entirely appropriated the rituals and practices of the German majority society, in spite of the conflict of not being at home in both cultures. The majority of German-Koreans finds that the traditional, conservative and Confucian-influenced practices of their parents, aren't for them [*kaum noch etwas anfangen*] and are assimilated to the point of being unrecognizable [as Koreans]" (Hyung, 2008:139)

Hyung (2008) positions the second generation in this quote as 'between cultures' and claims that the second generation has rejected the first generations' values and practices so entirely that they are almost entirely assimilated to the majority society. He implies

⁵⁷ http://www.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_6.jsp?cid=260918

⁵⁸ Hyung uses both 'kyopo' and 'German-Koreans' to refer to the second generation.

that there is a rift between the first and the second generation, and a culture-conflict in which the second generation has to choose sides, ending up displaced between all sides.

“It’s easier for us,” a first generation woman told me, “at least when we get asked where we are from, we can say ‘Korea’. We were foreigners, we still are, so it’s not that hard. But it must be difficult for your generation. It’s different, isn’t it?”

There seems to be a chasm between the first and the second generation of Korean migrants to Germany; a difference of experience that dichotomises the first and the second generation, and equally Germany and Korea that leaves the second generation displaced. Hyung (2008) goes so far as to say that the second generation’s experiences make them reject the first generation’s practices and values, and assimilate to the majority society. The second generation German-Koreans become an anomaly in that they are without a *Heimat* as a physical, mental and cultural space, belonging nowhere and almost vanishing into the majority society. But, filial relations and histories are the products of interactions between individuals whose goals and strategies are formulated through cultural systems of meaning. Hence, for German-Koreans, continuity is as much a theme as change. The complexity of filial relations, their continuity and change, the constant negotiation, are informed by several factors, both interior and exterior. The parents’ generation’s experiences and aspirations- learned in a Korean context- shape filial relations and inform the way the second generation perceives itself, while at the same time they are informed by their everyday experiences within the majority society.

In this chapter, I posit that that dichotomising the first and the second generation, and equally dichotomising Germany and Korea, is too simplistic to understand the position of the second generation of German-Koreans in Germany. Casting the first generation as reactionary and unchanging, and characterising the majority society in similarly absolute terms, creates a discourse in which the second generation appears displaced. I aim to take a different approach in exploring the self-understanding of the second generation of German-Koreans by exploring the dynamic character of relations; looking at the way values were transmitted and which values were transmitted, and whether they changed, I focus in particular on mothers and daughters.

I present a fieldwork incident which is reflective of many others I experienced with second generation women. Using this, I aim to identify cultural legacies, and cultural

change. To do so, first, I discuss pre-migration cultural influences, focussing on family experiences, norms and cultural frameworks. I explore traditional Korean family structures and the role of women within the family. Then I will explore family patterns of Korean migrants to Germany and ask: Have they changed? And if so, how? Building on the previous chapter “Yellow Angels”, I show how the mothers situate themselves in the framework of traditional Korean filial relationships and gender roles, and how these frameworks are subject to negotiation and change.

This will lead me to a discussion of factors that have shaped German-Korean migrant families and informed the experience of second generation. I will trace continuity and change, using different examples. The second generation questions ‘Korean’ filial relations, portraying the parent generation as reactionary and as continuing advocates of the ‘Korean’ system. I ask what consequences the continuity of the ‘Korean system’ has, especially for young second generation women, and how these experiences shape their self-understanding and the way they situate themselves in relation to Korea and their German environment. I ask whether the second generation is displaced and “assimilated to the point of being unrecognizable” (Hyung, 2008:139). In this context the question of integration into the majority society and the experience of being othered arise, but for the purpose of this discussion I focus on the first and second generation’s relations with each other and on Korea, rather than the discourses that surround them within a majority society context.

My main argument is that the second generation positions itself as a group whose identity requires a new word to describe it: *kyopo*. Their experiences are shaped by the continuity of Korean filial relations, the everyday experiences of their German environment with which they contrast them, and the experiences of visiting Korea, and seeing themselves as different from ‘Korean-Koreans’. They draw on all these experiences to position themselves as *kyopos*.

5.1. ‘The other Korean’- Meeting Johanna

The first meeting between Johanna and myself took place in a small student café, quite different from the setting her mother, Mrs Kim, later chose. We had never met before. I

didn't know Frankfurt well, so we had some difficulty deciding via e-mail on a place that she would reach easily, and that I would find without great difficulty. Neither of us was greatly worried about recognizing the other. It was a foregone conclusion for both of us that we would. We were used to being 'foreigners' and the majority society identifying us as such, so both of us were looking for the waiting foreigner. Later, during my fieldwork I often did the same with other informants. Johanna was easily enough identifiable, and recognized me equally easily, when both of us were looking out for *die andere Koreanerin* [the other Korean woman], as Johanna put it, referring to the ethnic implications of our looks from the perceived perspective of other passers-by.

Johanna arrived by bicycle, coming straight from university, and was dressed casually in jeans, running shoes, dark sweater and jacket. She had long straight hair, always kept in a neat pony-tail. Her clothes were discreetly expensive and *ordentlich* [neat], neither fashionable nor unfashionable, but practical. Later she explained to me that her mother always insisted that she look orderly, and that it was "one of those things you do to keep your parents happy", even though she no longer lived at home.

The café she had chosen to meet in was as different as can be from the cafés her mother later chose. It was a popular student café that doubled as a pub in the evening, with an unvarnished wooden floor, darkly painted walls, mismatching chairs and tables that were a little worn, painted in dull blues and orange without varnish. The interior left the impression of carefully arranged decay. Alternative music came from the loudspeakers, and every table was furnished with a candle in an old wine bottle and a heavy glass ashtray as a centrepiece. We chose a table away from the front windows. It was quiet, except for the music, with few others present, but smoke was already thick in the air.

The first thing Johanna did, after ordering tea, was light a cigarette. She explained that she had come straight from lectures and desperately needed one, looking around carefully before lighting up. Much later, by the time I had been in Frankfurt long enough, I realized that inadvertently I had begun looking around myself too, before lighting a cigarette, taking on the behaviour of the young women around me, who always feared that someone might see them and report it back to their mothers. Being caught smoking would reflect badly not only on them, but on their mothers by implication, hence we couldn't sit by the large windows, but had to sit further to the back to minimize the possibility of detection.

To her knowledge Johanna's mother never ventured into this café, and neither did any of her friends, who rarely had occasion to come to this part of Frankfurt so close to the university. Hence most of the passers-by in the street that we could see were students as well and unlikely to tell Mrs Kim that Johanna was smoking. Thus our whole first meeting was from the beginning influenced by the rules of behaviour set for us by the influence of our respective mothers. Both of us could use this as a point of reference for the beginning of a conversation and the shared amusement that we had had no trouble recognizing one another. We were both influenced by an environment, in which we were easily identifiable as ethnically different, and by the Korean-influenced home-environment in which we had grown up. It served as a starting point for our chat, which didn't begin as a formal interview. Our chat was intended in the way of sounding out Frankfurt and the Korean community there. Hence it was more an informal conversation and an exchange of experiences than an interview with specific questions, although I did take notes. Many of the events and experiences we shared, centred around everyday encounters. After beginning with lighting a cigarette and explaining to me that she had just been to lectures, Johanna asked me if I had found the café easily.

I told her that I'd had some trouble, getting lost around the Botanical Gardens close by the university, and told her how I'd stood in the middle of the pavement, grappling with my map, when a blond man in a business suit had asked me in German-accented English if he could help me. Perplexed, I had answered in German, which made him laugh in surprise and say: "Oh, you're German!"

Rolling her eyes and laughing, Johanna shared similar experiences with me, about similar incidents. "Sometimes it's funny," she said, "sometimes it's just annoying, if you aren't recognized as German."

"So what would you say you are?" I asked.

It took Johanna a while to answer, before she shrugged and said that she supposed she was: "A bit of both." And quickly added: "But when I was doing my exchange year in France, I liked saying that I'm Korean when people asked- to make myself more interesting. Germany was just around the corner and there were so many Germans around. And old people in France still get upset about the war and stuff."

Johanna's nationality is German, but both her parents came from Korea in the 1970s. "They all came over as nurses and miners, didn't they? What about your mother, was she a nurse too? See, they all came over like that. Then got married, had children and just stayed, or did your Mum ever seriously think about going back? My parents did think about it, but I guess my Dad more than my Mum, and you know how it goes! What, you don't know the joke? My Dad likes telling that joke!"

At that point, she sat forward eagerly, grinning with glee. "So, you know how there used to be village elders in Korea in the villages, and one day, the village elders- all men- decided to find out who really had the power [*wer wirklich das Sagen hat*] in the village. So they draw a line in the dust, and say that everyone who decides at home should go to the right, and everyone who doesn't, should go to the left. All the elders go to the left, except one man. So they're surprised, and ask him: 'Do you really get to make the decisions at home?' At that he answers: 'No, but my wife said I should go to the right.' That's the way it goes at home too and my Dad says you can't argue with a Korean woman." Johanna said it was a joke from Korea, although it exists in variations in Germany as well, but in the course of talking about her family, it was one of the few times she mentioned her father, Mr Kim. She mentioned him by the bye, focussing on the relationship with her mother when talking about her home life and what she knew of Korea.

This incident highlights several recurrent themes, centring on the ambivalent positions of the second generation in relation to the first and to the majority society. There are three themes that run through the incident; these need to be contextualised to understand the incident fully. In the course of our meeting several things were said and happened that show the way young *kyopo* women position themselves.

The main theme is shared experience that provided a basis for us to relate to one another. From the beginning of the incident to the end, shared experience was the red thread that ran through the incident, connecting all other themes. We both expected to meet 'the other Korean woman' in a relatively crowded place. In a city like Frankfurt that is popular with tourists and has a large foreign student population, to any reasonable person it might sound impossible and naïve of us to blindly set out to meet. But through familiarity with German practices of othering, and by reading visual and bodily codes we managed to meet. This shared experience provided the basis for further

discussion of identification, this time by the majority society. Johanna made it clear that sometimes others' identifications annoyed her and that sometimes she thought it was funny. She also related to me how she used it to her advantage, while pointing out that in a different environment, like France, she considered herself German.

Another point of shared experience is the experience of having Korean parents. Johanna was both concerned and dismissive of the concept of filial piety, wearing clothes that she liked, but that would also satisfy her parents. And even in public, she was concerned with being caught smoking. The continuity of a Korean-influenced home-environment and change was a recurrent theme. It also served as the point of departure for talking about gender, albeit in a joking way. But what is more important in this incident is not what was said or done, but what wasn't said and done, the explanations Johanna did not give and the questions I did not ask: in other words, implicit, shared knowledge. We both assumed that the other would know what we were talking about on the basis of having one or two Korean parents, living in Germany and "being a bit of both".

This incident illustrates that the relationships between first generation parents and their children are shaped by the first generations' experiences learned in a Korean context, which shape the experience of everyday life for the children. Moreover it shows critical awareness of filial relations and gender issues. But it also highlights everyday experiences within the majority society environment and the shifting positions of the second generation that they use to situate themselves. To fully comprehend, this incident needs more context to highlight what I mean when I say that what was most important was 'what was not said' - how the assumption of shared experience, of continuity and change within a German environment, is used to create community and self-understanding.

5.2. Mothers and Daughters – Change, Continuity and Expectations

This section looks at traditional ideas about Korean families and the concept of filial piety in order to examine continuity and change in cultural conceptions and social practices. In a new setting—here, that of Germany-- these do not continue unchanged, but are restructured. That is not to say that there is such a thing as a timeless traditional

Korean family, but I argue that migrants may come to think of their home society in such terms. To contextualise Johanna's way of presenting herself and her Korean mother, in particular, it is necessary to look at such constructions "from the natives' point of view"--as if they *were* fixed and timeless--before discussing the way in which they are altered or reinterpreted. Yanagisako (1985) in her work on Japanese filial relations in the United States points out that migrants may construct their own versions of tradition as they conceptualize the past to make sense of their current experience and to speak to current dilemmas and issues (Foner, 1997:963). These invented traditions can have a life of their own in that immigrants may interpret and act upon the present in light of their own models of the past (Yanagisako, 1985:247).

The first generation of Korean female migrants to Germany continued some elements, while breaking with others. While most of my informants narrated how they met their husbands, making their own choices and moving away from arranged marriages. Innovation and continuity went hand in hand. Thus, narratives about the families they raised reiterated a "matrifocal family culture" (Cho, 2002:177), allowing the first generation women to see themselves both in continuity with tradition as honoured mothers, while at the same time asserting their own modernity (compare chapter 4 "Yellow Angels"). Here Korea as the origin of values was the point of reference, putting actions within a recognized and honoured framework that explained their actions. In her work on Japanese Americans Sylvia Yanagisako (1985), discusses the interpretations of filial relations between the *Issei* (first) and *Nisei* (second) generation of Japanese Americans. She writes that when she asked Issei men who were junior sons whether after marriage they had lived with their parents, a common answer was: "No, *in Japan*⁵⁹ it's the first son who must live with his parents." (1985:161).

Similarly, when I asked a first generation Korean woman who only had daughters, I frequently received the answer: "*In Korea*⁶⁰, people want sons." Thus, as Yanagisako writes about the *Issei* that they 'depict the "Japanese way" as having little ambiguity, inconsistency or indeterminacy' (1985:161), the first generation Korean women present 'Korean' filial relations as fixed and bound by rules, as ideal models of relationships. But "if immigrants bring with them a 'memory of things past' that operates as a filter through which they view and experience- and create new lives [...], it is also clear that

⁵⁹ My italics

⁶⁰ My Italics

much changes (Foner, 1997:965). Thus, the first generation of women had no difficulty recounting and explaining deviations from the rules, and recognizing them as change. Many narratives on bringing up children in Germany focussed on the sacrifices made for these children that again highlight the continuity and change in filial relations. Mrs Pak said about bringing up her daughter and paying for her education:

“It was difficult, because we didn’t have much money, so my husband and I had to work full-time, both of us, but I even got educational television channels for our daughter. It was very expensive. Sometimes my husband and I didn’t see one another for a long time, because we were working different shifts. We used to leave notes on the kitchen table, things like- please buy more rice, and such stuff. [...] I wanted a son, in the beginning, but I decided I didn’t want another child, it was too hard. Because I had to work so much I never had time to sit my exams to qualify as a nurse. And I had to continue supporting my parents in Korea. My brother didn’t do it, even though it was his task. So even though he was the son, I was like a son. Write that down: son or daughter it makes no difference [*Ob Sohn oder Tochter ist doch egal*].... Initially, I wanted a Korean man for her, but then I would have preferred a German man. My husband [when their daughter decided to get married to an American citizen] said that I raised my daughter wrong.”

Mrs Pak framed her narrative about raising her daughter and filial relations in terms of continuity with the framework of *yangban* success and values and maternal self-sacrifice to allow her daughter the best possible education. Her husband played a marginal role in her narrative on bringing their daughter up. She portrays her husband in the role of provider, who helped her provide for the child that would transfer status and power onto her.

At the same time in wanting an education for herself, in focussing on a daughter and asserting herself as being “like a son” she used and deviated from the ideal traditional framework of how things are done in ‘Korea’. Within the framework of Confucian patriarchy in terms of which traditional Korean society is often described (Cho, 2002:170), Mrs Pak situated herself as the self-sacrificing mother, demanding respect through maternal identity and role, as the mother of a successful daughter. But she also

stressed her own modernity and change, breaking away from traditional Korean thought.

The joke Johanna told me about gender relations in a Korean village in an unspecified past (see above) is telling. The gender relations the joke portrayed at first seemed at odds with the image of Korea as a traditional patriarchal society, but on closer inspection the crucial and revealing question in the joke is “Do you really get to make the decisions at *home*?” In the timeless, traditional Korea the joke evokes, the answer is naturally “no”. Thus, the joke actually reveals a continuity with *yangban* organizing principles that gave a mother absolute power over the domestic sphere. “That’s the way it goes at home too,” Johanna added and cast her mother in the role of “a Korean woman.”

As a matter of fact, maternal influence and the implied reference to rigid notions of Korean filial piety informed this entire meeting, from Johanna’s clothes to her body language, and the choice of seating. Her mother, she said, always insisted that she looked *ordentlich* [neat and orderly], and Johanna obliged her long after moving out of home, to keep her happy. While she smoked, she remained mindful that someone might see her and report back to her mother. Smoking, as a bad habit, is acceptable for boys and men, but a woman smoking in public reflects badly on the mother that raised her, and Mrs Kim would have been embarrassed if someone had seen her daughter smoking.

Johanna was aware of that, having been raised by Korean parents in the spirit of “a timeless past of family tradition” (Foner, 1997:963). In this family tradition that defines female success by way of children, Mrs Kim’s success depended on her only daughter, so Johanna couldn’t smoke where someone else could see her, but asserted herself by doing it anyway. She wasn’t alone in doing so. Kathrin, Jong-Soon and many other female informants secretly smoked in the same way Johanna did, and asserted that they told “little white lies to keep my parents happy”, while they indulged in activities that went uncontested for women of the majority society.

When talking about filial relations, husbands are largely absent from the mothers’ narratives, but with that absence comes another pointed absence, which has an impact on the second generation women in terms of gender. Husbands are foremost seen as another mother’s sons, which by implication indicates the presence of another women:

the mother-in-law. Traditionally the mother-in-law was the most powerful female in the household. Good sons had to be loyal, firstly, to their mothers. Cho (2002) relates how during the 1960s in Korea, young husbands began to think that their loyalty as household heads was to their nuclear family, and suffered from torn loyalties between wife and mother (2002:174). The first generation Korean women in Germany spent most of their married lives, except for visits to Korea, away from the scrutiny of their mothers'-in-law, and didn't want their daughters to have to live with a conservative mother-in-law, hence Mrs Pak's change of heart in wanting a German man for her daughter, despite previously having thought badly of Korean women going out with German men. Different standards applied to sons and their wives. Within the *yangban* framework a son's success was a mother's success, a sign that she had raised him right; his success was the reward for her sacrifice and suffering.

One first generation mother that I interviewed had two sons. She had come to Germany as a nurses' aide, and her husband had come as a miner⁶¹. They had two sons of whom she was very proud, but also embarrassed. Neither of her sons had done well in school, and neither had graduated from university. One of them had gone into nursing and the other had become a mechanic. Whenever possible, their mother avoided mentioning their professions or quickly stressed that they earned very well, even without a degree, claiming some sort of success. Their financial success without a degree, was a continuous cause of embarrassment to her, while her own and her husband's financial success was a point of pride.

There is no such heightened expectation for daughters on the surface. Narratives on family represent a difference in what mothers wanted for their daughters as compared to their daughters-in-law and their sons. A daughter's academic success was presented as desirable, but not a necessity. However briefly looking at the competition between Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim about their daughters, illustrates the difference between actuality and representations. Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim used to work in the same hospital in the 1970s, got married at the same time, and had daughters at roughly the same time. Mrs Kim proudly told me about Johanna that she didn't

⁶¹ Notably, he was one of the few miners that were actually qualified in Korea as miners, not a former student or white-collar worker.

“regret not quite getting a university degree, because that way I had time for my family[...]. Both Mr Kim and I had to work full-time, but I wanted her to have the best [possible education, including a private school and tutors].”

Mrs Kim’s narrative in many ways reflects Mrs Pak’s above, focussing on the sacrifices and her pride in providing Johanna with a good education. She also continuously referred to her husband as “Mr Kim”, indicating a distance between them, and casting him in the role of provider, while she raised ‘her’ (not ‘their’) daughter.

Mrs Pak and Mrs Kim were engaged in a competition between their daughters. Gossip⁶² within the community indicated that Mrs Kim portrayed her daughter, Johanna, as better than Mrs Pak’s daughter, who hadn’t attended university, but gone into banking. Mrs Pak was deeply hurt, especially since her daughter had recently married an American and her husband had also accused her of raising her daughter wrong. She lamented these accusations. In her narratives, she framed her relationship with her daughter in terms of self-sacrifice and suffering for her daughter’s education, and then quickly counteracted her daughter’s ‘failure’ with an account of success, such as Mrs Pak’s daughter earning very well in banking, as an indicator that she did not fail as a mother.

Neither the above mother of two sons, nor Mrs Kim and Mrs Pak were unsuccessful themselves. Their families had achieved a degree of middle class comfort that rendered them successful in the eyes of the community, whose narratives of origin stressed the economic hardships they had endured in 1950s Korea, and the deprivations in Germany, while sending money home. Their success was highly regarded and they showed it outwardly in discreetly expensive clothes and expensive cars, but within the ‘traditional’ framework of Korean families, the failure of children to succeed at higher education, and thus fulfilling the *yangban* ideal, was a cause of embarrassment for them.

What the disagreement above also highlights is the difference between the representations and the actuality. Expectations for daughters differ on the surface, but the way in which first generation women spoke of their daughters situated this different expectation in terms an innovation and continuity of *yangban* ideals, which is to say

⁶² I learned about the gossip from various sources, mainly first-generation women, who would allude to a disagreement between the two women, and from second-generation informants who had heard about it from their mothers, and finally heard a brief account from Mrs Pak.

that: Mothers transferred their own aspirations for themselves onto their daughters and harboured expectations similar to the expectations of sons. The expectations of sons remained the same. Change was gender-specific.

“Son or daughter, it makes no difference.” Mrs Pak said, after admitting that she initially wanted a son. Similarly my mother told me that our Korean relatives in Korea were relieved when her first child was a boy, because now she had a son. Traditionally sons were valued above daughters, whose birth was what the Chinese refer to as “small happiness” (Patterson, 2000:139), meaning that true happiness comes with a son. In connection with their own individual dreams and aspirations, first generation Korean mothers in Germany altered and changed such traditions to a more equal approach for sons and daughters.

However, as already indicated with the smoking incident, the approach was more equal, and not fully equal. For the parent generation, an educated, successful German-Korean daughter is both continuity and change. Thus, to say that immigrants change, does not mean that they become fully assimilated. Yanagisako (1985) argues that immigrants and native born Americans may have apparently similar norms, regarding for example conjugal relations, but they may conceptualize these norms in light of different folk histories. Transferring her observations from American-Japanese to German-Koreans, the same holds true: immigrants “interpret their particular cultural histories in ways that generate issues of meaning and symbolic categories that in turn structure their kinship norms” (1985:260).

5.3. ‘You have to have Korean parents’ - The second generation of German Koreans

“My German friends sometimes don’t understand. You have to have Korean parents to understand.” Kathrin, Jong-Soon and Johanna, all at various points made that statement. Usually they shrugged at the same time. They considered it given that there were limits of communication and that only someone who had Korean parents- or at least one Korean parent like I- would understand what they were talking about. Or rather: that they would understand without requiring a long explanation.

In this section, I explore how the second generation understands and conceptualizes itself in relation to the parent generation, the majority society and Korea. Having explored traditional Korean notions of filial relations, and the conceptualization of women's status, I am looking at the second generation here, and how they view and negotiate the first generation's discourses, and situate themselves. For the second generation, the family is also the space in which "the handing down of cultural identity through the generations" (Parker, 1995:86) takes place in ways that need to be negotiated with the everyday experiences in the majority society. Yanagisako (1985) writes about Japanese- Americans and their children that they built their lives there and drew on models of "Japanese" as well as "American" kinship, creating a "Japanese-American" synthesis (1985:22). In order to explore how this is done and articulated, I begin with identifying several different ways of handing down cultural identity and the conflicts that arose from them. Then I will look at gender specific issues, before examining how the second generation talks and thinks about the perceived discrepancy between 'Korean' and 'German' ways, and how it positions itself.

'Korea' as it is known from the narratives of the first generation is a place that the younger generation has no active part in. The second generation is removed from it due to having no shared experience of authenticity, while at the same time linked to it. New generations are 'agents of change (Fortier, 2000:89)'. The second generation regarded their parents' stress on academia and good grades with ambivalence, but recognized the sacrifices their parents made. According to Beckers-Kim (2005) 95% of second generation German-Koreans pass their *Abitur* and attend university. It sounds like a resounding success story, but such success came at a price and isn't as straightforward as the number suggests. To quote Kathrin: "A Korean mother will do anything, absolutely anything for her children. German parents won't. Korean parents will sacrifice anything for their children to succeed. That's why we're successful, but you have to play by the rules."

Most of my informants agreed, stressing not only how important education was to their parents, but the various sacrifices their parents had made, such as hiring tutors, buying expensive books and instruments, or ordering special – at the time- expensive foreign language TV channels to help with language education. "Korean parents will do absolutely anything for their children," was a statement my informants repeated to me,

their facial expressions sometimes indicating that the statement wasn't wholly positive, because of the implied parental pressure.

Patterson (2000) points out, the stress on education caused conflicts and in spite of high achievements, the second generation was critical of the parents' generation and their experiences with education. This is best exemplified by an example taken from the *kyopo* forum online. One of the German-Korean members wrote autobiographical posts about his experiences growing up in Germany, mostly about family life. These pieces enjoyed immense popularity, until they suddenly stopped and the member disappeared. Most of the responses to the posts were enthusiastic. "Somehow all *kyopos* seem to have experienced the same thing." Or "It's like reading my own diary", were among the most often repeated replies to the posts. Moving away from the parental narrative centred on the sacrifices made by parents for their children, the posts in this forum shed an even more critical light:

"Talking about 'seven'. That's how many kilometres my parents had to walk to school, in summer and winter, mostly barefoot. Aha. Because the family was very poor, and that is why they always worked hard and were very diligent. Mother and father were at the top of their class. My parents were careerists. Hang on, careerist and then working in a coal mine? Why not doctor or lawyer? University was unaffordable, all right, that's why not. Or was it the duty to wear shoes? Barefoot to university, in winter, walking seven kilometres. No one cared to do that [*darauf hatte einfach keiner Bock*]. School was important, and we got that idea. [...] The Korean⁶³ didn't have any problems in school, was always diligent and extraordinarily helpful, especially in maths his son/daughter showed extraordinary performances. [...] There weren't many *Realschüler* or *Hauptschüler*⁶⁴. You might as well just become a *Penner*⁶⁵."

⁶³ 'The Korean' [*der Koreaner*] pokes fun at older German books and language usage that refer to an entire people in the singular, making it look and sound as if every member of a certain people were the same. An example of this usage would be the 1932 book "*So lebt der Russe*" [This is how the Russian lives] the German title of a book by the American William White. Compare to earlier discussion in chapter 3.

⁶⁴ Germany has a three-tiered education system. Hauptschule provides the education necessary for manual work. Realschule for white-collar work and Gymnasium prepares for university.

⁶⁵ German colloquialism for someone who doesn't work has no future and is possibly homeless, i.e.: the antithesis of the first generation's aspirations.

Some of my informants referred to their parents' desires for good grades as a form of tyranny. The pressure of expectation was too much for some. One of my informants, Sophie, a university graduate, said:

“All hell broke loose if I brought home a bad grade. My German friends thought getting a *Zwei*⁶⁶ [two] was pretty good. For my mum that wasn't acceptable. It is a good grade, but she wanted more and better. That was too much for my brother. He finished school and got his *Abitur*, but you should have been there when he decided not to go to university. He's a civil engineer now, and our mum is so proud. It was a bit easier for me, but they [meaning the first generation] all want their sons to become doctors, lawyers or civil engineers, don't they?”

Alexandra recalled that,

“I always did very well in school, so no, I can't say that I ever felt pressured. Probably in primary school a bit, but once I got into the *Gymnasium*, I just did well on my own. They pushed my brother far, far more. After all, he was the son. It wasn't crazy, and they didn't mind if you came home with a *Zwei*, but a *Drei* was *grenzwertig* [on the border of the acceptable].”

Sophie's and Alexandra's statements highlight the importance of gender and the way the second generation experienced a difference in expectations. Like Kathrin they differentiated between Germans and Koreans, meaning her everyday school environment and her parents respectively, but made a difference between her experience and her brother's. Gender deserves special attention for two reasons- for one, because of the traditional preference for sons in Korea, and for another, because it is an aspect often ignored when discussing identity, and especially migrant identities.

Elaine Kim (1993) writes:

“Certainly it was possible for me as a Korean American female to accept the fixed masculinist Asian American identity posited in Asian American cultural nationalism, even when it rendered invisible or at least muted women's oppression, anger, and ways of loving and interpreted Korean Americans as imperfect imitations of Chinese Americans; because I could see in everyday life

⁶⁶ The German grading system in school used numbers ranging from one to six, one being the highest.

that not all material and psychic violence to women of colour comes from men, and because, as my friends used to say, ‘No Chinese [American] has ever called me a “gook” (1993:x).

This suggests that gender is only a part of a larger pattern of unequal social relations in which Asian American women and the desire to unite with the men to contest the overarching racial ideology that confines them both (Espiritu, 1997:104). While I am looking in more depth at the issue of ‘racial ideology’ and gender in the German context in chapter 6 ‘The Good Foreigners’ the issue of gender within the Korean community needs discussing here. Just as the first generation made different experiences based on work and gender, the second generation experiences gender as a vital component of their identity, and there are marked differences in experience.

Speaking of *kyopo* identity as a concept, gender differences were less apparent except when my informants spoke of parental expectations of boyfriends or spouses, and the differences between their treatment and their brothers’. Of my female informants nearly all had at least one brother. Some also had a sister or several, but the general trend was for a son and a daughter within my informant’s families. Narratives about growing up from my female informants with brothers, centred on the unequal treatment at home, in spite of the first generation’s assertions that gender made no difference. Household chores were a main point of contention. As Christina, a female informant with one older brother, recounts:

“When I was small, my mother showed me how to do laundry and ironing, and then I had to do it myself. Do you think my brother ever had to do any ironing? No, he got everything ironed, nicely folded and only had to open the wardrobe to pick out a fresh shirt. I always had to help my mother out, but he never did, because he was a boy. She spoilt him rotten, because that’s what Korean mothers do with their precious sons.”

My female informants with brothers quietly resented the difference in treatment and saw a double standard that disadvantaged them. This did not only extend to housework, but also to personal liberties. Hye-Ung said:

“Boys just get more liberties. That’s just the way it is, and on top of that they get their mothers doing everything for them. They get spoilt rotten [*Die werden*

verhütschelt]. My father didn't want that. He thought it was bad for my brother, and that he should learn to be more independent. Not that it was unfair, but that he would get a weak character from being so spoilt. [...] It's different if you're a girl, because something could happen, so they try and protect you more."

As Sophie put it:

"My brother and I were raised differently, no doubt. I was never allowed to spend the night anywhere, because 'a Korean girl doesn't sleep in other people's houses' - he could just do what he liked. I had to be the good Korean girl, and I always had to help around the house. It was unfair that I had to do all that stuff, and he had our mother or me do it for him. He couldn't even iron his own shirts when he left home, and I'd been doing it for years. My Dad was just the same."

Anne:

"When we were teenagers, my brother would just go out, and no one ever asked him where he was going. With me it was: where are you going? Who are you going with? When are you coming back? Of course parents always worry more about girls, but it was annoying that he could just come and go as he pleased. I would definitely say that they gave him much more liberty than me. Sure, my German female friends' parents asked them too about where they were going, but it was different. If they wanted to stay out, then they could, but if I wasn't home when I said I would be, all hell would break loose.

Another point of contention were disagreements. Central to traditional Korean Confucian values is the notion that children should obey one's parents and elders without question as they are older and wiser. This held particularly true for my female informants.

"You don't argue with Korean parents. If they tell you to do something, then you do it. You can't really rebel, because they do so much for you. And if you did, and someone heard about it, they would lose face. Keeping up appearances is important to them. But it's even more important that you do as they say at home. Otherwise they have failed as parents. My brother got away with much more

than I ever did. I had to be the good Korean daughter, who keeps quiet and smiles, and doesn't complain."

These experiences of gendered upbringing, and being disadvantaged, seem to play an important role when it comes to finding a partner for the young women. Hyung (2008) notes a trend amongst second generation German-Korean women: "there are barely any Gyopo⁶⁷ [sic] women that marry Gyopo men, even if I cannot give statistics. Gyopo women take *einheimische* [native] men for boyfriends or future spouses. In contrast Gyopo men are rarely seen with native German women. They usually start relationships with native Korean women [...] (2008:231)". Lee (1991) claims that nothing is known of the relationships of the second generation. Having no statistics to support such a claim either, I can only say that most of my male informants had Korean-born/Japanese/Chinese girlfriends, who mostly had come to Germany as students or whom they had met on visits to Korea. My female informants either had German boyfriends or had married Germans.

Hyung (2008) quotes a young second generation woman:

"From the beginning, since I reached the age when you slowly start having a thing for boys, I never felt drawn to Koreans. I felt drawn to German boys. Maybe that was defiance on my part, because at home I had to play the *dienende* [serving] daughter for my brother and my parents. That's the culture in Korea. Women have to help in the household and be nice. With my German boyfriends I was free of such restraints and could show myself as an emancipated individual" (2008:231-232).

Many of my female informants echoed such sentiments. Kathrin told me that her father was adamant that she should not bring a *Gelbhaar* [yellow hair] home as a boyfriend. Other female informants echoed such ideas from their fathers in particular. "My father wants me to marry a Korean, but going out with German guys is easier. They expect less, and pitch in. A Korean man would expect you to do his laundry, because that's what his mother does, but here the boys learn how to do their own housework. So they're used to it."

⁶⁷ 'Gyopo' is the Germanicized form of *Kyopo*. Both are in use, although in online forums the Anglicized spelling is the preferred one.

Time and again, my informants stressed how fathers in particular, opposed German boyfriends. Anne recalled hiding her boyfriends from her parents.

“I think that’s something we’ve all done. When I was a teenager, it would have meant trouble, bringing a German boyfriend home. My father wanted a Korean for me, and would have had a fit. He’s calmed down now.”

Narratives about conflicts with parents centred on the different gendered experience; fathers were at the centre of these conflicts as the “authority figures authority figures responsible for setting a good example and, when necessary, meting out discipline” (Patterson, 2000:137). Many of my informants reiterated the notions Patterson (2000) describes. Many of my informants shared that experience of their fathers, who barely featured in narratives; when they did include their fathers, it was to contrast them as ‘old-fashioned’ with the mothers, or to point out their absence. In talking about families and growing up, most of my informants’ narratives centred on their mothers, siblings and friends. They presented their fathers as ‘old-fashioned’ or as disciplinarians, and in narratives in which they appeared more often, they were portrayed as the ones who “still want to return to Korea”.

One of my female informants told me that when she got married, she had been going out with her (German) boyfriend for several years and had long ago introduced him to her family. Her father had ignored the boyfriend as best as he could, hoping that he’d go away eventually. Only when she told him that she was going to get married to the German boyfriend, did the father finally acknowledge him. Similarly, Mrs Pak (above) recounted how her husband accused her of “raising my daughter wrong” when their daughter got married to a non-Korean. My second generation informants described the fathers as rigidly holding on to Korean values and practices, especially with regards to the treatment of their daughters and their partner-choices. Hurh and Kim (1984) noticed a similar attitude amongst Korean-Americans. More than 60% of the respondents to their survey stated that they disapproved of intermarriage [with other ethnic groups], while only one third approved (1984:79). The chief reason their respondents gave were “differences in feelings, thinking, and customs between races; Koreans must marry Koreans; a dislike for mixing blood; etc” (1984:80). The first generation women I spoke to, weren’t opposed to intermarriage, but the second generation had experienced resistance from their fathers mainly. Some of my informants reasoned that a second

generation German-Korean man would be better able to understand them, having shared many of the same experiences, or as Kathrin put it: “You have to explain less.”

Sarah echoed those sentiments:

“I would have preferred a *kyopo*, when I was younger. When you’re talking about Korean things, then they just know and understand, because you have a lot of experiences in common. And I thought it would be easier with my parents. Whenever I had a German boyfriend I hesitated introducing him, because my parents wouldn’t be unfriendly, but not precisely happy either. When I met my [German] partner, I stopped worrying. My parents have accepted him, and that’s that.”

At the same time, the second generation women were not opposed to intermarriage. In fact, all of them had German boyfriends or husbands, unless they were single. All women in particular stated their dislike of what they perceived as traditional Korean gender roles, fearing that even a German-Korean man would insist on such traditions. Or as Sophie put it: “Why would I want to marry some Korean mother’s spoilt little boy?”

Looking at gender relations from the point of view of cultural legacy and continuity and change is limiting. It fails to sufficiently explain the phenomenon that Hyung (2008) and I have observed in marriage patterns or the choice of a partner. Regarding gender from this perspective limits understanding to the narrow conclusion that young second-generation women are rebelling against Korean patriarchy and reactionary fathers and brothers, while young second-generation men resort to ‘importing’ brides. From this perspective it would be easy to conclude that second-generation women consider Germany and the majority society as liberating and therefore embrace it, while first generation and second generation men are reactionary and oppressive. This would indicate a return to Chin’s (2007) trope about the oppressed Turkish woman, but the issue is far more complex than that. I return to the discrepancy between genders repeatedly in the following chapters, discussing masculinity and femininity, and conflicting notions of masculinity.

The second generation portrayed fathers as the ones who bought expensive VCRs that could play Korean videotapes, sent by relatives from Korea, so that they could watch

Korean dramas⁶⁸ or listen to Korean music. Fathers, in the narratives of the second generation, were the reactionary forces in their families; the ones that “held on to Korea” in the form of Korean passports and traditional values. The second-generation perceived fathers as the ones who had never quite arrived in Germany. Comparing such statements to an informant’s father’s statement, about a visit to Korea and no longer recognizing it as his home, it would be appropriate to ask the question which ‘Korea’ the fathers hold on to, and want to return to. Unfortunately, it would far exceed the scope of this thesis to discuss this issue in depth. Nonetheless, I maintain that the second generation narrates a sense of displacement that they notice in their fathers⁶⁹.

The second generation saw their fathers as very different from their German friends’ fathers. In their narratives, their fathers do not provide role models for successful masculinity in everyday German society. Although I lack the voices of the first generation men and therefore focus on the way they are represented and perceived by those around them, these representations highlight how the second generation women in Germany situate themselves, and think about gender.

Part of this phenomenon is surely the personal and individual experience of having brothers on the side of the women, but another facet of this is the way in which the majority society stereotypes second-generation German-Korean men as effeminate. I return to this perception in chapter 6 “The Good Foreigners” to explain the situation of German-Korean men. Nonetheless, it is important here to point out that there is a difference of perception that creates a possibility for second-generation German-Korean women. The majority society views them positively, in a similar sense to their mothers, who were called “yellow angels”. While this positive perception, combined with the educational opportunities and a tradition of changing and challenging Korean patriarchy as their mothers did, presents a chance for second-generation women, it is also limiting. It depends on a cliché of a frail, subservient and quiet Asian woman, creating limitations in everyday life. Hyung (2008) presents the example of a young German-Korean woman, a medical doctor and an emancipated woman that did not correspond to

⁶⁸ Mainly Korean period dramas set in the *Choson* period. The Korean film industry produces many of these, especially series that run for several seasons and portray the re-imagined social world of the *Choson* period. It would be interesting to explore these dramas and the way the first generation consumed them in more detail, but that would far exceed the scope of this thesis.

⁶⁹ It would be interesting to explore the published self-representations of first-generation Korean men in Germany, their consumption of Korean period dramas and personal narratives in depth to gain a better understanding of the way they position themselves.

the cliché of a reserved, humble Asian woman. He describes how that prejudice became her “downfall, because every now and then she contradicted her superior. The answers came tactlessly, like: ‘You are behaving very rudely for an Asian woman’” (2008:141). He goes on to describe her job-interview:

“The chief of medicine asked me if I was Korean, which seemed to surprise him. Then, the usual: he paid me a compliment, said that my German was without a flaw. I don’t know if he read my in papers that I was born here. Then he dared ask me to greet him in Korean, and I obliged, since I did not want to be impolite at the first meeting. Every German-Korean is different in their own way and form, like every individual. What connects us is our connection to Korea and our looks, TRY-underwear and cheap BYC- socks⁷⁰, which every German-Korean in the course of their lives has worn at least once” (2008:142).

The crux of the matter is that in order to fully comprehend the situation of the second generation of German-Koreans, it is insufficient to focus on the complexities of filial relations, change and continuity. The second generation’s lives are lived in everyday Germany, and to fully appreciate the complexities and the gender relations, it is necessary to discuss the second generation within a German environment and everyday lived experience as well. I will do this in chapter 6 “The Good Foreigners” in more detail, but what is important here is the statement of connection via shared experience.

Actually, not everyone has worn TRY underwear or BYC socks at one point in their lives, and not every second-generation German-Korean woman smokes and hides it from her parents, as Kathrin was fond of claiming. And not everyone had to listen to endless tapes of Korean music sent by Korean relatives on car journeys. Not everyone still sings these songs at karaoke. And not everyone likes *bulgogi*⁷¹ or has a sudden craving for fried pigs’ stomach when drunk, as Jens assured me “all German-Koreans do”. Such sweeping statements were popular amongst my informants, but the two things everyone did have in common was having Korean parents and the fact that they were living in Germany.

⁷⁰ Korean brands

⁷¹ Marinated and then barbecued beef

5.4. 'The deep sadness of being Korean in German(y)' - Language and becoming *kyopos*

Having explored continuity, change and conflicts with the parent generation, tracing the way in which the second generation situates itself in relation to the first, in this section I explore how they articulate their difference.

Language is an important factor in the transmission of cultural values. While many of my informants spoke no Korean or very little Korean, a few did speak Korean or had learned some at the *Koreanische Schule*⁷². Importantly, at the lower spectrum of my informants' age group, the number of Korean-speakers was higher. My older informants, those born in the late 1970s and the early 1980s mostly told me that their parents did not teach them Korean for fear that they would learn neither German nor Korean properly, which would have impaired their academic future in Germany. At the time they were children, the Turkish psychologist Öktem studied Turkish migrant children in Germany, and found that many Turkish children spoke neither German, nor Turkish to any level of fluency, coining the phrase about them "illiterates in two languages" (Wilpert, 1977:480). According to my informants, paediatricians advised their parents that it might be too confusing to teach them two languages and that they might become 'illiterates in two languages' as well. In Hawaii, Patterson (2000), notes that "English was the native tongue of the second generation" (2000:131), and that amongst themselves, the second generation spoke English rather than Korean. Similarly, German is usually the language of communication, and the key to academic success. What this means is that the Korean stress on academic success is combined and translated into German.

In practice that meant that for most of my informants, German was not only their first language, but also the one spoken at home. Mothers generally had better German-language skills than fathers, although depending on social interaction with co-workers and their environment, paternal language skills varied. Most of my informants who spoke little or no Korean, said that they "would quite like to learn Korean". A few of my female informants referred to their limited abilities as "Kitchen Korean", meaning that they spoke and understood enough to follow the commands their mothers gave them in the kitchen, while cooking. Christina said that:

⁷² The *Koreanische Schule* was an extracurricular Saturday school, set up by the first generation to teach Korean. Some of my informants attended it as children, others did not.

“My parents insisted on speaking German at home, although they would talk in Korean to one another, especially when we children weren’t supposed to understand something. So we picked up a few words here and there, not enough for a deep conversation, but enough to say simple things. I never had much opportunity to speak Korean, so when I do now, I still sound like a child with limited vocabulary.”

‘Koreanness’ at home was transmitted using German, highlighting the differences between the parent generation and the second generation subtly, creating a link with Korea, while at the same time indicating that the present and future for the second generation lies within Germany. Patterson (2000) observed a similar pattern among the Koreans in Hawaii: “the second generation spoke ‘tainted’ Korean to the first generation and English amongst themselves and with others. For the second generation, mastery of English was crucial to their success” (2000:131). Educational success is crucial, and within a German context only possible when one is fluent in German. Fluency in German and lack of Korean language skills thus is not considered a loss amongst the first generation, but a necessary means for success for the second generation.

“German, you have to speak German properly. Not like the Turkish children, who don’t speak proper German, or proper Turkish, so you’ll do well in school!” Anne recalled her mother saying. “I wonder how she knew they didn’t speak Turkish properly.”

But according to Kim (1986), the second generation in Germany suffered from their inability to speak Korean, or speak it fluently, leading to an identity crisis. The experience of Korean parents, a German majority environment, and the alienation from Korea as a source of identification, as well as the inability to speak Korean either at all, or sufficiently, sets the second-generation apart and led to the use of the word ‘*kyopo*’ as self-description for the second generation of German Koreans. In the original meaning of the word, *kyopo* simply means ‘Korean, living in a foreign country’, and thus is inclusive not only of the parent generation, but all Koreans living outside of Korea. At first glance, using the term to exclusively describe the second generation, seems to indicate that they consider themselves Korean, abroad and not at home (Korea), although all of my informants were born and naturalized in Germany. *Kyopo* thereby seems to exemplify the identity crisis Kim (1986) asserted.

Roberts (2008) analyzed the use of self-identifications in German-Korean online forums. She claims that most of the young people and adults online who stated their opinion on identity defined themselves mainly or partly as Korean, and using words with a Korean background to identify, like “Hanguks”- a word borrowed from Korean (2008:2). Roberts (2008) observes that other names are used to express different issues, like cultural knowledge or linguistic ability, like “70-90% Koreaner” meaning that the poster wants to say that his knowledge and linguistic ability isn’t perfect. “Other terms used attempt to explain ethnicity, like the term ‘Ganzkoreaner’ [Full-Korean] or ‘100% Koreaner’ (2008:2).” According to Roberts, “bi-cultural identity is expressed through the Korean terms ‘Kyopo’ (Korean living in a foreign country) and ‘Isae’ (second generation), with both terms using ‘being Korean’ as a point of reference. It appears that all [forum-] members accept both identities, but there are many discussions, where people argue about which one describes their identity better. Some members identify without a problem with the term ‘Koreaner’, while others find ‘Kyopo’ more fitting, since they recognize that they are different from the ‘Koreans from Korea’ and do not want to see themselves as exclusively ‘Korean’” (2008:4). She concludes that the second generation uses such terms as ‘real Koreans’ to distinguish themselves from ‘Koreans from Korea’, and that the usage of adjectives like ‘real’ indicates a deficit in Koreanness that the second generation feels (2008:3). She asserts that the second generation in Germany lives between two worlds and is unhappy in both, feeling that they are mainly regarded as non-German (2008:6). Using the most popular self-description *kyopo* represents, for Roberts (2008), a solution for the second generation, since it connects both sides, but is also fraught with problems. The term *kyopo* is not in common usage in Germany, hence is only meaningful for Korean-speakers. What is more, it underlines the “connection to being Korean” (2008:8), which Roberts thinks does not reflect the self-understanding of the second generation, lacking the German component vital to the self-understanding and suggest different words like “German with Korean background (2008:8)” as an alternative.

The question is whether those who identify as *kyopo* need a new name that would better reflect the German component, or whether Roberts’ suggestion would limit the German-Korean meaning. While it is true that the word *kyopo* is not in common German usage, it is questionable whether linguistic constructs like the one suggested would better reflect “the double belonging” (2008:8) than the word *kyopo* that “with the emphasis on

being Korean, possibly hinders acceptance into German society, which maybe wonders why the Koreans insist on their ethnic identity” (2008:8). However, such a conclusion ignores that the word *kyopo* – in a German-Korean second generation context- does not mean ‘Korean living in a foreign country’, but ‘second generation German-Korean living in Germany’. That is to say that it is not a straightforward reflection of ethnic identity, but expresses specific circumstances and a community of feeling bound by shared experience.

I am not debating a Korean component of *kyopo* identity, but that Roberts (2008) largely ignores the project of creating a community and an identity that encompasses all components, and expresses difference. Roberts’ (2008) approach attempts to move away from an essentialized Korean identity. She claims the second generation of German Koreans feel deficient in ‘Koreanness’, so she suggests a hybrid identity that emphasizes being German with a Korean background. This would “recognize the German [identity] as the dominant one” (2008:8).

In the course of my fieldwork, I came across a concept that would at first glance support Roberts’ (2008) argument that Koreanness is deficient among the second generation. In the first round of formal interviews I conducted, I asked the question ‘what do you consider typically Korean’, hoping to gain a better understanding of the concept of what constitutes Koreanness from my informants. All of my informants named several things, some of which indicated a trend, like naming different foods. But nearly all of my informants presented me with one word: “Han”. Unable to speak and understand Korean, I asked what it means, and then proceeded to ask everyone who mentioned it. The answers varied, but everyone agreed that it was the essence of Koreanness. A direct translation is impossible, although “sorrow” or “sadness” come close, without sufficiently explaining the concept behind it.

Korean scholars variously explain *Han* in philosophical, historical and psychological terms, for example: “[...] *Han* is the central experience of the Korean people as a result of centuries of foreign oppression, tyrannical rulers, discrimination against women and slavery” (Yi, 1996:57). *Han* is frequently translated as sorrow, spite, rancor, regret, resentment or grief, among many other attempts to explain a concept that has no English equivalent. (Dong-A 1982: 1975). *Han* is an inherent characteristic of the Korean

character and as such finds expression, implied or explicit, in nearly every aspect of Korean life and culture.

Han is sorrow caused by heavy suffering, injustice or persecution, a dull lingering ache in the soul. It is a blend of lifelong sorrow and resentment, neither more powerful than the other. *Han* is imbued with resignation, bitter acceptance and a grim determination to wait until vengeance can at last be achieved. (Bannon, 2008)

Han is passive. It yearns for vengeance, but does not seek it. *Han* is held close to the heart, hoping and patient but never aggressive. It becomes part of the blood and breath of a person. There is a sense of lamentation and even of reproach toward the destiny that led to such misery. (Ahn 1987)

Han can also be fatal. Elaine H. Kim (1993) writes: “*Han* [is] the sorrow and anger that grow from the accumulated experiences of oppression. Although the expression is frequently and commonly used by Koreans, the condition is taken quite seriously. When people die of *han*, it is called dying of *hwabyong*, a disease of frustration and rage, following misfortune.”

My informants didn’t use the expression frequently and commonly. On the contrary. The only times they spoke about *Han*, was when I asked them in the interviews what they considered ‘typically Korean’. Other answers to the same question, like references to food, or stereotypes they had mentioned, came up frequently, but *Han*, which everyone agreed was central, remained pertinent through absence. I did ask all of my informants for an explanation for what *Han* meant to them. Here are some of the answers:

“*Han* is the deep anger and sadness the Korean people felt because of the Japanese occupation period, and the atrocities they committed against the Korean people.”

“It’s like a deep hurt you feel in your soul, but can’t talk about. All Korean people have that in common. It’s part of the Korean soul, like an underlying sadness.”

“It’s about suffering and endurance. Suffering in silence and dignity. *Han* ennobles you.”

“If I had to translate it, I would say it’s a bit like *Weltschmerz*, but it’s something that all Koreans have in common.”

“*Han* is the anger and resentment you feel towards your mother-in-law. Mothers-in-law treated their sons’ wives quite badly, traditionally, and you couldn’t say or do anything against it. It’s about suffering in silence.”

These are but some of the answers I received, although most were variations thereof. *Weltschmerz* was the closest I came to a German translation, although as pointed out, *Weltschmerz* is a more individualistic feeling that stems from the realization of the cruelty of the world, and the circumstances caused thereof, leading to internal sadness. *Han* is both individualistic and communal. The understandings and explanations my informants gave me, varied, but everyone had an understanding that shared the idea of suffering, silence, resentment and dignity.

One answer an informant gave me, jokingly, was: “If you have to ask, you’ll never understand!”

While David meant his flippant answer as a joke, it was revealing. *Han* wasn’t something my informants discussed. It was nothing they all had one monolithic understanding of. But they all knew what it meant, and that it was an intrinsic part of being Korean; an intrinsic part of being Korean, Elaine Kim (1993) claims that Koreans speak of frequently, and apparently one which permeates literature, art and film (Bannon, 2008). At first glance, it seems that the rather different understandings and explanations my informants gave me, indicate the ‘deficiency in Koreanness’ that Roberts (2008) asserts. The explanations my informants gave me, they had from their parents, who were faced with the same difficulty as they were explaining to me: trying to translate a difficult concept into German. Translations being notoriously difficult for concepts, subtle meanings get lost, when direct equivalents are unavailable, and the context is absent. However, I argue that my informants’ varied answers are not indicative of any deficiency, but indicative of the malleability of the concept. Comparing them to the more theorized explanations of *Han* above, my informants’ answers are neither lacking, nor exceeding the scope. It bears repeating that “*Han* is the central experience of the Korean people as a result of centuries of foreign oppression, tyrannical rulers, discrimination against women and slavery” (Yi, 1996:57), arguing that

the emotion behind *Han* remains the same as circumstances change throughout history. That is to say that *Han* is a timeless concept, applicable to ever changing-circumstances.

Chu (2008) writes about the “postmemory *han*” of the second generation of Korean Americans, as something transmitted through their parents by way of tales of experiences of suffering. She puts these first generation tales within the specific context of the Japanese occupation period of Korea, and draws comparisons to the way in which the children of Holocaust survivors “remembered” their parents’ suffering. Although not experienced firsthand, the transmitted memories come alive, but are altered: “A second generation Korean American might be haunted by her parents’ anguish, but she would be equally haunted by the knowledge that she herself was not directly victimized by the circumstances that led to such pain” (2008: 98). Thus the second generation Korean American’s personal *Han*, while connected to both the parents and the memory of collective suffering, is individualistic insofar as it adds a layer of experience that is new to each generation.

Han functions for my informants in the same way. Far from static, the concept has both collective and individual meaning for them. It is a concept their parents transmitted and translated, thus making it relevant to their own experiences. Transmission need not even be verbal. In the previous chapter “Yellow Angels”, I have mentioned Mrs Pak’s negative experiences in German hospitals and her coping mechanism of singing: “So I used to sing when I was cleaning on the wards, just sing and sing till I no longer felt so angry and frustrated.” Singing plays a central role in Korean sociability, and the importance of singing will be further discussed in chapter 7, paying particular attention to *Han* in conjunction with gender. What is important here, is that the parent generation did transmit the concept to the second generation, who made it their own, both continuing and changing it. They all said it was something essentially Korean, and yet they never speak about it.

I argue that in subtle ways *Han* is present, although not explicitly stated. One thing my informants would talk about in formal interviews and social meetings was the experience of constantly being asked “where are you from?”

Johanna told me that:

“I sometimes get annoyed. You know, you meet someone and you talk to them, and then they ask you where you’re from. Of course you know what they mean, but they don’t want to say ‘You look funny, what’s up with that?’, so they try to find a way around it. You can just see it, how they’re trying and can’t think of anything. Sometimes I make their lives difficult, and say ‘I’m from Frankfurt’, and then you can see them blush. They don’t know what to say then, and so they try again and say things like: ‘yes, but where are you from originally?’. It depends on whether I’m in a mean mood or not, but if I am, I’ll tell them that that’s where I’m from originally. And then they get really flustered, because they just don’t know what to say. So I usually put them out of their misery and tell them that my parents are from Korea, and then they try being clever and ask whether they’re from the North or the South. Can’t get out of the North, can you?”

Johanna wasn’t the only one who ‘sometimes got annoyed’ and left those that asked to try find different ways of asking, before telling them that her parents came from South Korea originally. Behind these stories lay the painful experience of constantly being “othered” and constantly reminded that the majority society doesn’t see one as “properly German”. The listeners invariably would nod, and reply with phrases like “I know what you mean”, having shared the same experiences and frustrations. Frustrations that began with Mrs Pak’s experience of being called a “dirty Korean”, or being relegated to cleaning despite being a fully qualified nurse, or the fathers’ experiences of being marginalized as miners. *Han* may be a Korean concept, but it transcends a narrow definition of ‘Koreanness’ in the lives of *kyopos*, who apply it to their experiences in Germany.

Similarly, at my first meeting with Johanna, we established ourselves in narratives of shared experience: “They all came over as nurses and miners, didn’t they? What about your mother, was she a nurse too? See, they all came over like that.” Establishing a shared history and shared experience, meant that she could assume that I would know “what she meant” since I had a Korean mother. In other words: some things no longer needed saying, or requiring long explanations. “You know what I mean”, was shorthand tapping into a world of perceived, shared experiences and shared understandings. Korean parents meant shared experiences that the other could relate to, which in turn

meant that some things could be left unsaid on the assumption that they would be understood within a certain shared framework of meaning by the listener. (I will return to this discussion in chapter 7.)

Thus, I argue that deficiency does not stem from insufficient Korean language skills as Kim (1986) claimed, or that using the self-description *kyopo* is indicative of deficiency at all, as Roberts (2008) asserts. Such an approach is only valid if one accepts ‘Koreanness’ as a monolithic concept one can be deficient in. I posit that regarding someone as deficient in Koreanness, indicates that Roberts’ (2008) understands ‘Korean’ as an essential identity. However, the crux of being *kyopo* is not ‘Koreanness’ as such, but the shared experience of having Korean parents, and living in Germany. *Kyopo* takes on a specific meaning for the second generation, referring to double belongingness in relation to Germany, and is an identity that is a narrative of self-production.

5.5. ‘Somehow all *kyopos* have experienced the same’ – Narratives of self-production

Moving “beyond the paradigms of ‘identity crisis’ and ‘between two cultures’” one can “develop a more refined view of identity formation” (Parker, 1995:173). This sees identities as formed in two ways; through narratives of self-production, and through defences against unwelcome attributions made by others (1995:173)”. Using an example by the same anonymous source as above, taken from the *kyopo* online forum, I intend to show how the second generation creates narratives that situate them in relation to the first generation, their German majority society environment, and a timeless ideal of ‘Korea’.

“The generation Korea, yours, mine, our generation is only in existence because at some point our fathers and mothers once liked one another (‘liking’ seems a better word than ‘loving’.) Since my parents really liked one another then (they had to) I was made. Yes, my parents had sex and they had it with one another, which I absolutely cannot imagine, and you probably can’t either, since other than our German friends, I’ve never chanced on them on a Sunday morning in

their bedroom naked ‘wrestling’ or ‘doing sports’. No kissing (neither French kissing nor on the cheek!), and absolutely no holding hands. Why, I never!

On birthdays there was and is a polite handshake. And that’s the be all and end all. After all though, it’s not Gorbachev and Kohl meeting one another after the fall of the Berlin wall, but only Mom and Dad. That which connects my parents still are probably the tax benefits and the status within the Korean community. Not that my parents have much status, but probably they imagine they do (like any Korea family). Fact: My parents don’t match very well, and they don’t particularly like one another, which I’ve known since I was ten years old. Some are shocked by this, but I’ve always found ‘Al Bundy⁷³’ much more realistic than the ‘Cosby family’, who are just sick and way too harmonious.”

In contrast, the official narrative within the setting of formal interviews centres on acknowledging the sacrifices parents have made, referring back to ‘Korea’ as a source of tradition and explanation of parenting styles. The second generation conceptualizes filial relations in terms of a contrast between cultures, seeing much of their lives and actions influenced by a ‘Korean past’ and ‘tradition’, much more so than the first generation would explicitly claim. In contrast to the first generation, ‘Korea’ in discourses on family and filial relations serves less as a point of departure from tradition, but as a justification for conservative parenting, when compared to ‘German’ parenting. They agree that their upbringing was governed by ‘Korean tradition’, but as Yanagisako (1985) asserts for the Japanese American Nisei, the second generation sees expectations of obedience and duty not communicated so much by what the first generation said, as by what they did. In the official narrative in formal interviews, due respect is paid to the sacrifices the parent generation made, however more informally, such as on the *kyopo* online forum a different light is shed on the perception of Korean parents. For one thing, the above segment highlights the different perception of relationships between spouses, contrasting the Confucian family relations between spouses with an immediate environment in which spousal relationships are supposed to be more intimate than mother-child relationships.

⁷³ The protagonist of a once popular US show called ‘Married with Children’, depicting a dysfunctional family, while the ‘Cosby Show’ was equally a show about families, though in this case a harmonic and successful family. Both shows ran for many seasons on German TV.

Second-generation informants ridicule the apparently very polite manner in which the parents meet, reminiscent of Mrs Kim's insistence of referring to her husband as "Mr Kim"; they liken this to the frosty political relationship between East and West during the Cold War, which they see as far removed from Western notions of families and familial love as possible. This leads to a perception of family life as dysfunctional as the comparison with Al Bundy indicates. Time and again the narrator draws in the reader, creating a sense of community, while relating personal experiences, which posits the reader and the narrator between two different cultural frameworks of reference, thus creating a third. On the one side are the Korean parents, whose actions and behaviour is considered typical for Koreans, typical for Korean parents and telling of their contemporaries' behaviour and way of relating to one another. On the other are 'our German friends', whose experiences with their parents are assumed to differ vastly from the readers' and the narrator's, to such a degree that they render the behaviour of the Korean parents strange and at odds with the 'German' environment. This kind of narration creates a community of narrator and readers, who both share the same set of experiences, cultural references and awareness of both the Korean parents and 'our German friends', putting each at odds with the other. The discrepancy between different realms of experience and the drawing on different frameworks of interpretations in the above segment cannot be resolved, as long as the discourse dichotomises 'Korean' and 'German'. 'Koreanness' and 'Germanness' are not mutually exclusive, but reside together in juxtaposition. They are presented as mutually exclusive, but being *kyopo* is inclusive of both concepts. The solution is provided through ambiguity, in which an amalgam of elements combine to create a community of narrator and reader. "Those who've lived through it understand me." The segment continues at a later point, going on to address the reader directly: "And you understand me, don't you?"

The narrator relates the tale of a childhood visit to Korea, one of two that he undertook in his life, and all when he was a child, finishing with:

"You can imagine that that was a real culture-shock for a spoilt German-Korean like me, can't you? For the next few years, I didn't really feel tempted to fly to Korea. Generally my image of Korea changed since that point of time. Disappointment, maybe? Or did I realize that something wasn't right with me?"

Am I truly Korean? A real one, I mean. Is that my culture? Would I rather eat pizza or rice?- Pizza, but does that make me an Italian?”

Again, the questions raised here are aimed towards the reader, and much more explicitly state the discrepancy between ‘Korea’ and ‘Germany’ as two different frameworks for identity, explicitly creating a new category, while at the same time calling into question the markers of identity. What is Korean? What is German? What makes one Korean or what makes one German? And how can these different concepts of identification be synthesized? Or do they need to be? The final question raises the question, which the speakers are posing to themselves, whether such strict categorizations are useful at all. Underlying the last paragraph is the narrator’s sense of displacement when visiting Korea, which I will return to in chapter 7. Korea in the present day has changed vastly from the time of the first generation’s migration, but as mentioned previously, visits to Korea were sporadic for most of my informants. Some of my informants said that their first visit to Korea was great to begin with. Johanna described it as follows:

“Suddenly no one stares at you, suddenly everyone looks just like you. But then you realize that you miss a lot of things you’re used to from Germany, and everyone knows you as ‘the German girl’. And you don’t have as much liberty.”

Hyung (2008) recounts a German-Korean informant saying: “If I go into the street in Germany, people stare at me dumbly, and it’s the same thing in Korea, as if they knew that I am not a native Korean” (2008:222). Another says: “If I met Koreans [in Korea] they were always acting so stiffly. Initially I didn’t know whether it was anything to do with the fact that I’m a foreigner. Later I realized that that’s to do with the Korean culture [...]”.

The experience of being a foreigner in Korea is one of the shared experiences. The anonymous narrator of the *kyopo* forum puts his sense of alienation into stark terms:

“One word: outside latrine. Those who’ve experienced it, understand it. And you understand me, don’t you? We can spare ourselves the details. I want to return to Germany.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ At the time of writing the narrator was a grown man, recounting childhood experiences in the Korean countryside.

Like the above narrative indicates, I posit that the word *kyopo* does not indicate a deficiency, but awareness of a specific individual and shared experience that creates a community. Anne said:

“Every Sunday, we spent two hours in Korea, attending services. That was it. Two hours, every Sunday, and Germany for the rest of the week. I found Sundays boring, and the only reason I went, was to meet other *kyopos*.”

Using ‘German with Korean background’ as a self-description portrays an understanding of a fragmented German-Korean identity that is additive in its nature. It dynamically combines the fragments of two static concepts. The understanding of the word *kyopo* in a German-Korean context seeks to encompass multifaceted experiences that narratives such as the one above highlight. The definition of being *kyopo* is dependent on combining a Korean past with a German present, creating a community of shared experience and understanding that transcends that of ‘our German friends’, and that of the ‘Korean parents’.

My first meeting with Johanna illustrates the point. Johanna and I were looking for ‘the other Korean’. Used to the constant experience of being othered or “stared at dumbly” as Hyung’s (2008) informant put it, we had an expectation of visual difference, based on the knowledge that one or both of our parents had migrated from Korea. The knowledge that the majority society identified us as ‘other’ also served as a shared basis of experience, when we were talking about members of the majority society being surprised. Johanna said that she either thought it was funny, or she was annoyed when others didn’t recognize her as German, in Germany, but almost in the same breath shifted positions and recounted how she claimed to be Korean while in France, to make herself interesting and set herself apart from other Germans, and so as not to offend older people who connect Germany to WW2. Identification seemed a choice to her, depending on her situation, how she wanted to portray herself and what was most advantageous at the moment. At the same time, the expectation that older French people would get upset with her for identifying as German indicated that Germanness played a role in her self-identification. But when asked how she would describe herself, she would say “a bit of both”.

Contrary to ideas about culture conflicts and resulting identity crises that operate “with a static notion of what constitutes a culture and values, assuming that they are transplanted [...] wholesale, and are either taken up or refused outright by young people growing up here” (Parker, 1995:11), Johanna’s approach to identity was inclusive. Notably she didn’t say ‘half and half’ or ‘German-Korean’, or used any form of self-description that dichotomizes two different categories, but used the words “bit” and “both”. That is to say that she neither identified fully with either and did not identify in equal parts with both, but left leeway for herself to shift her position as she pleased; although she did acknowledge that that is not always possible due to outside ascriptions.

5.6.Conclusion

Hyung (2008) claims that the *kyopos* in Germany are so assimilated that they are almost unrecognizable. He further asserts their rejection of their parents’ values, traditions and practices. The claim that the second generation in Germany is displaced and situated between worlds, unhappy in both, is one that is reiterated time and again, not only about the second generation of German-Koreans, but about other second generations, like the Turkish second and third generation. The idea of the second generation as individuals that are displaced and torn in a conflict of cultures, at odds with their parents’ reactionary world and not quite at home in the majority society, dichotomises *Ausland* [foreign country] and *Deutschland* [Germany]. Generalizations about the resulting ‘plight’ of those seen as in direct conflict and stranded between two value systems (Parker, 1995:12) are easy to make when analysing in terms of such a dichotomy. This approach conceptualizes migrant children as in conflict with their parents, “facing the difficulty of negotiating two incommensurable value systems” (Solomos 1988). The resulting- inevitable cultural conflict- victimises the second generations, as “vulnerable to identity conflicts and low self-esteem” (Parker, 1995:12). Such an approach fails to take into account the possibilities and agency of second generations, positing the parent generation and the majority society as polar opposites. Identity is not a readily measurable attribute, but more of an ongoing construction (1995:13) and negotiation that does not happen ‘in spite’ of different cultures, but is a continuous process of a “shifting combination going beyond a stark either/or dichotomy” (1995:14).

Looking at the second generation of German Koreans in Germany, the framework that dichotomizes is insufficient, but still in use. It pitches the first generation against the second, portraying the second generation as displaced between cultures. At the same time, the second generation narrates its own identities and histories, recognizing conflicts, changes and continuities. While they themselves represent the first generation as ‘reactionary’, they are also aware of the changes in ‘Korean’ filial relations, and that filial relations are subject to negotiation. Yanagisako (1985) writes about Japanese American *Issei* and *Nisei* that they share the same conception of ‘Japanese’ filial relations, but disagree on when relations of this type existed. The *Issei* allege that their own relations with their parents were the last and there is some fuzziness when ‘American’ relations began. The *Nisei* do not portray the *Issei* as readily acceding to the ‘American’ way, but rather represent them as continuing advocates of a ‘Japanese’ system. Yanagisako (1985) assert that the *Issei* agree that the ‘old rules’ are no longer socially appropriate, but the *Nisei* also consider them inherently flawed.

The same statement can be made for the first and second generation of German-Koreans. Relating certain practices back to ‘Korea’ serves as legitimization of those practices as well as a point of departure for change. ‘Korea’ serves as a fixed point that provides meaning, just as ‘Germany’ does. The construction of timeless and idealised ‘Korean’ family traditions and filial piety creates a sense of a system that lacks ambiguity: a system people used to justify practices or challenge them, while at the same time using it as a shared history that conditions experiences used to create community. Korean tradition is the key to a code, explaining throwaway statements like “I think we’ve all hid our boyfriends”. Not everyone has hid their boyfriends, but tapping into ‘Korean’ family traditions, the listener can decode a wealth of information, without having to ask. After all, if you have to ask, you’ll never understand. Or rather: If you have to ask, you’re not one of us.

Hiding one’s boyfriend and not smoking in public are but two practices that illustrate the gendered nature of *kyopo* identity. My female informants were keenly aware of the gendered difference in their upbringing, and expected other *kyopo* females to have shared the experience, hence be fluent in their own, gender-specific code. Even without ever having had to hide a boyfriend, I knew “what Korean parents can be like”, and how to be a ‘good Korean daughter’. However, such code was strictly female, not mentioned

in the presence of male informants, and thus subtly reproducing the gendered spheres of 'Korea'. Among female friends, 'traditional' Korean friendships between women remained, at the exclusion of males, who did not share the code.

Just like 'Korea', 'Germany' is used as a point of reference that provides meaning. It stands for the present, and everyday lives without which the construction of traditional 'Korea' would be meaningless. The crux of the matter is that 'Korean tradition' and the shared experience created from it, depends on the foil of a German everyday life. 'The classic story', the myth of the nurses and miners, is specific to Germany, as are the consequent experiences. Theorists like Kim (1986) and Roberts (2008), and others who have written about identity crises among second generations, fail to appreciate the experience of being *kyopo* not as one that is deficient, but a process of continuous articulation of shared experiences that are highly dependent, not on essentialized notions of Koreanness and Germanness, but on the experience of growing up with Korean parents in Germany.

Thus, once a year on the 15th of August, the Korea Verband E.V. invites the German-Korean community to a *Sportfest* [Sports Celebration]. In a ceremony that commemorates Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, German-Koreans of all ages and from different cities compete against one another in different sports; there are food stalls and in the evening, there's a party and a concert with a popular band or artist invited from Korea.

Johanna: "They [meaning the first generation] do that for us [the second generation], the party I mean. But they're there to show off their new cars. It's like a whole parade of expensive cars. Koreans always do that. Showing off⁷⁵. It's so silly. But there's lots of good Korean food, lots to drink, and a party in the evening. It's good fun."

It was fun, and there was a lot of food, and a lot of expensive cars. It was also an experience that everyone who has attended school in Germany can relate to and few Korean-Koreans could. But for the first and second generation of German-Koreans in Germany, in the way it is organized, it presents a link between a Korean past and a

⁷⁵ The parent generation is showing off their personal success, as having come from poor migrant workers to being able to afford expensive cars.

German present, and between generations and a link between Korea today, and Germany today in the form of the band.

It is “a bit of both”, synthesizing what appears exclusionary, without becoming essentializing. Being *kyopo* is neither deficient in Germanness, nor Koreanness, and it does not require a prioritization of one concept over the other. Instead, it is a narrative of self-production and shared experiences that create community.

6. The Good Foreigners - The Limits of Identity for *Kyopos*

During the time of my fieldwork, the media constructed the social situation and educational achievements of the Turkish minority- especially of the second generation - as big problems. This affected the second generation of Koreans in Germany, raising questions about the integration of migrant children into the majority society. In this chapter I look at the broader discourse on integration and identity, within which the *kyopos* are situated and situate themselves. I ask: how do they come to be regarded as the ‘good foreigners’? What are the implications of the discourse by the larger German society for their self-perception and integration into the majority society? What are the possibilities for hybridity?

In order to give a sense of the issues that *kyopos* face and the complex and ambivalent responses to their positioning in German society, I first present two incidents from my fieldwork. The first is a formal interview with a young German-Korean man, Klaus. The second is a *kyopo* party, where an informal discussion and comparison of migrant groups took place. These two different events, with their specific settings and narratives, help us understand the way *kyopos* position, see themselves and imagine they are seen. I draw on these incidents throughout the chapter.

Within the German discourses on migration and integration, the Turkish minority is typically defined as ‘Bad Foreigners’, who are unable to integrate into German society and actively refuse to adopt a German identity. The difficulties become apparent,

particularly, with regards to the second generation. I consider the position occupied by the *kyopos* in this discourse: according to many Germans and in their own eyes too, they are the ‘Good Foreigners’. Contrasting their behaviour and values with the Turkish immigrants, *kyopos* stress their success and the ways they have accepted German values and ways of acting i.e.: the demanded perceived German identity. I posit that comparative discourses are part of an ongoing process of identification that creates “a wholeness, which is filled from the outside us by the way we imagine ourselves to be seen by others” (Hall, 1996:287). In the course of these narratives, *kyopos* express awareness that they are not fully accepted as Germans. They may be contrasted with the Turks, but both groups are, ultimately ‘foreigners’.

The section that follows further develops this point, considering incidents where non-ethnic Germans become aware of the majority society’s implicit belief in a racial definition of Germanness (as white) and consequently, the degree to which they are excluded from the recognition as fully German- not because of their beliefs, actions or values, but because of their phenotypical distinctiveness from Caucasian Germans. In the next section a further discussion of the implications along gendered lines follows, to explore the constructions of masculinity and femininity among the second generation. Finally, I look at Korean racial prejudices, and the discussions about those with one Korean and one German parent as a further layer of complexity. These experiences that non-ethnic Germans face reveal the limitations and insufficiencies of the integration discourse, and aim to highlight how *kyopo* identity is not only a “narrative of self-production” but also a “defence against the unwelcome attributions made by others” (Parker, 1995:173) that circumscribes the articulation of possibility.

6.1. Two fieldwork incidents

Incident 1: Formal Interview with Klaus

I met up with Klaus for a formal interview in January 2004. He was one of the *kyopos* who had answered one of my posts on *kyopo.com*⁷⁶ and agreed to talk to me. He asked to do the interview in the evening due to his work commitments, so we met in a bar in

⁷⁶ An online forum for young German-Koreans. Cf chapter 2.

the inner city in the evening. He was still dressed for work in a very formal suit, though without a tie and nursing a glass of wine, while frowning and considering my questions.

Generally, before answering, he considered my questions carefully and then replied, but in the course of the interview he spoke more freely and a conversation developed. He had been telling me about his parents and the expectations his parents had of him, and for him. His father, he had told me, had worked his fingers to the bone trying to provide him with a better future and a good education. He told me that he admired his father for that, but also voiced his criticism that the first generation in his opinion, remained too connected to Korea, and even more so, criticized that ‘the first generation demands of the second to make a choice- do you want to be German or Korean. The second generation is put up against the wall and has to choose, so instead we’re *kyopos*, because we depend on two categories.’

The first generation, in his opinion ‘remained in Korea deep within their hearts’ and demanded a similar affection and fondness for Korea from the second generation. But, ‘Korea is far away,’ Klaus told me. ‘Korea is far away,’ he repeated, whilst shrugging and pulling a face that indicated that he didn’t greatly care about Korea. ‘So saying ‘I am a proud Korean’, makes me sick [*zum kotzen*]). I mean, it’s just like saying ‘I’m proud to be right-handed’, isn’t it? What’s the point? Koreans just have prejudices, left, right and centre.’

Incident 2.: A *kyopo* party at which too many Germans were present

About a month later, he and another few of my informants went to an organized and public *kyopo* party together. After about an hour at the party, my informants with whom I’d come, agreed that the party wasn’t a success. It was bleak midwinter, it was raining and snowing outside, and we were sitting in a dark bar that remained fairly empty. Only three other tables were taken, and people wandered in and out to the dance floor and counter next door, and back again. A few familiar faces wandered in and out, but due to the bad weather not nearly as many people as usual had shown up.

The party was one of a series of parties held every two months in different locations, organized by *kyopos* for *kyopos* with the specific intent of giving *kyopos* a place to

meet. Mostly, they were held in Frankfurt, where the organizers were based, but twice they were held in nearby Mainz in a large university bar with an adjacent dance-floor area. While the word ‘party’ implies that this is an informal get-together, as a matter of fact it might be better understood as a more formally organized night with a rented location whose rent was paid for by raising an admission fee. As a comparison one might think of ‘themed’ nights in clubs, however the term used was ‘party’. Anyone willing to pay the fee could attend. The admission to parties usually cost around three or four Euros and drinks were cheap. A bigger party was held for Christmas in a more formal setting, drawing a larger crowd in formal attire, but the parties held throughout the year were informal.

The parties usually drew familiar faces and were an opportunity to catch up with *kyopo* friends with rarely more than two or three non-*kyopos* present. But that particular evening, there were about ten or twelve non-*kyopos*. My informants with whom I was sitting around one of the tables in the room connected to the dance floor, agreed that the party wasn’t a success.

Klaus was particularly irritated. Sitting in one of the booths along the side of the bar, he was looking out at the small crowd that was dancing, drinking one beer after another. ‘It’s not that good this time-too many Germans.’

By that time the party had been going on for a few hours, and considering that it was open to the public, a few people who were not ethnic Koreans had found their way into the bar. While open to the public, the term ‘party’ implies a closed setting and a celebration, hence the implication being that *kyoponess* was celebrated here, by those who could lay claim to it. Thus the non-*kyopos* stood out. There weren’t many, maybe ten or twelve – mainly young men- at best, and most of them crowding around the bar for drinks, but according to Klaus that was too many already. Not really in a talkative mood, he continued repeating that there were “too many Germans” around.

“It ruins the atmosphere.” He claimed, “We’re not amongst ourselves tonight. I don’t come here for that! What’s the point of having a *kyopo* party, if the potatoes take over? They just don’t belong here, and they’re not really participating either. Look, not one of them is dancing. They’re just here to check out the girls.”

He was referring to a group of young, Caucasian-looking men who were leaning against the bar, looking at the dancers, instead of dancing. The bar was quite crowded, mostly with other *kyopos*, and most of them men, while those dancing were mainly women. One of the young women was dancing with a non-*kyopo*, who had come with her, but other than her and him, the groups didn't mix.

Jens, who was sitting with our group, didn't object to the presence of the non-*kyopos*. "What are you complaining about? It's an open party, so why shouldn't they come? And we're only 'rice-potatoes' too."

"It's not the same when they're here," Klaus insisted. "The other parties lately were much better. Not so many Germans."

"What do you expect if you're throwing a party in a university pub? There's cheap beer on sale, of course people are going to come! They're only here for the beer," Alex said.

Klaus wasn't so easily pacified and continued complaining for a while that having the Germans here would ruin the mood, the setting and the atmosphere. He insisted that it was a *kyopo* party, organized by *kyopos* for *kyopos* so that *kyopos* could get together. The "potatoes", meaning the Germans, had no place there and their motives were dubious. "They're only here to check out the girls," he kept repeating, "and just wait till it gets late enough, and they're drunk enough to dance. They all can't dance to this sort of music."

"This sort of music", meant R'n'B, which was a staple at most *kyopo* parties, as I found out from my informants and by means of observation. "Only black people really can dance to that," Alex said. "It's funny. Koreans don't like black people, but they like the music. They think they're better than them, but then Koreans always think they're better than everyone. We're always the best in everything!"

At this point, Jens butted in again. "It doesn't even have to be true."

And Klaus agreed with him. "Just ask my Dad, he'll tell you how great the Koreans are. They're the best in everything, according to him, and he's oh-so proud to be Korean. I mean, after he's been living here for more than thirty years, he still holds on to his Korean passport, which is no use to him. Every single time he gets to a border, they check him. It's much easier having a German passport. They don't give you shit if

you're trying to travel somewhere, no visas needed for the States either. He's just stupid. What an idiot!"

Jens was getting cross with Klaus' negativity and began teasing him that the Koreans were the best at some things. "Compared to the Turks we're so much better, aren't we?"

Initially it wasn't entirely clear whether he meant it or was joking, but he clarified his statement saying that he had been joking, but 'if you look at it, we are, aren't we? I mean, they barely make it through the *Hauptschule*. And most criminals in Frankfurt are what? Turkish. It's because they don't give a shit [*Weil es sie einen Scheiß interessiert*]. No education, no future, no perspective.'

Klaus agreed with him on that, gesticulating to underline his points. "The Germans think that we are the better foreigners, and you know what, they're right. It's because the parents don't care. Look at them and look at us. Most of them can't even speak German properly. Our parents made sure that we do. They cared, and you know what it's like, don't you? You'd better make the grades in school, or else..."

He didn't need to finish that sentence, but only rolled his eyes and grinned at us. Our small group was laughing and nodding, toasting one another with beers, because we did know. "Can you imagine what would have happened if you ever came home with a bad grade or got into trouble with the law?" he asked us, winking. "My parents would have made the police look like orphans [*Meine Eltern hätten die Polizei wie Waisenkinder aussehen lassen*⁷⁷], I'd have been in so much trouble."

There is no concrete meaning behind the 'or else' and the 'trouble' he described, but the shared idea that each and every one of us understood immediately that our parents would be disappointed and that this was a shared link between *kyopos*. A lack of academic success would have meant losing face and status within the Korean community for the parents, and the disappointment would have led to constant arguments at home. Again, the rest of our group agreed with him and described parental disappointment, possible loss of face and status, and agreed that as a *kyopo*, showing

⁷⁷ Meaning: Compared to what his parents might have done, anything the police could have done to him, would have been harmless.

“the slightest sign of becoming *assi* ⁷⁸ like the young Turkish migrants”, Korean parents would have disciplined them.

‘And they don’t even speak German properly.’ Both Klaus and Jens repeated, shaking their heads.

Jens: ‘Our parents care. They made sure we speak German. It’s a lot to do with our mothers, isn’t it? I mean, if you look at it, the Turks came over as guest-workers too, only the men though. And then they sent for their wives, who became housewives. Never had to work, so they never had to learn German, and stayed amongst themselves. So they spoke Turkish at home, and because the Germans hired uneducated Turks, the kids didn’t learn German and no value was placed on education. They all come from Anatolia, and that’s the poorest part of Turkey, you know? And now the Germans are complaining about them left, right and centre, because the kids are criminals.’

“Compared to the Turks, our parents had an education. They didn’t just take anyone to become a nurse or a miner. They were educated people.” Klaus looked to the party-goers he had identified as ‘Germans’ again and scoffed. “What can you expect if you cart a load of Anatolian peasants into your country?”

Distracted by the activity on the dance floor, he got irritated again. “What’s the point? I come here to meet other *kyopos*, not to hang out with that lot. If it continues like that I’ll stop coming to the parties.”

Everyone agreed. Both incidents highlight several recurrent themes, centring on the ambiguous positions within the debate on Germans and immigrants. These need to be contextualised to understand the currents in conversation. Both discussions draw on the perception of German society of migrants and the discourses surrounding them, which both situate *kyopos* as well as creating a discourse they use. This can best be seen when opposing the formal interview setting with the informal chat at the party. The interview and the chat took place in different settings that directly influenced the tone.

During the interview that took place at the bar, Klaus and I stood out as an ethnic minority, while those around us appeared to be German, based upon their language.

⁷⁸ A-social: colloquial adjective used to describe someone or an action that is not socially acceptable. In this case it refers to the stereotype of Turkish migrant youths being disruptive, criminal, uneducated and disrespectful.

Surrounded by the everyday majority society, Klaus answered my questions with deliberation, criticizing the first generation more than the majority society. He talked about his father keeping his Korean passport and showing pride in being Korean that his son ridiculed. Klaus valued a German passport since “it makes it easier to travel”. He reduced a German passport to a piece of paper while his further comments indicated his ambiguity: Although he was a German national, in the eyes of the majority society he remained a foreigner. He didn’t consider himself as ‘fully German’ as those around us, nor as ‘fully Korean’ as his father. Instead, he explicitly stated that “we depend on two categories”, meaning Korea and Germany, “making us *kyopos*”.

However within the informal setting of the party, it was precisely the arrival of several visible members of the majority society, which sparked resentment, and led to a less conciliatory debate about migrants. Contrary to the interview here, *kyopos* were the majority. When the roles were reversed, and visible Germans attended a party that though public, implicitly was designed to celebrate ‘*kyoponess*’, Klaus explicitly said that the Germans ‘just don’t belong here, and they’re not really participating either’, sounding reminiscent of the discourse used to debate the issues of migration and integration within the German public, only this time voiced about the attending Germans.

Within the interview that took place in a situation in which *kyopos* were the visible minority, the discourse used, veiled the ambiguity of being a ‘rice-potato’, while it came to the fore at the *kyopo* party, organized by *kyopos* for *kyopos* so that *kyopos* could get together. The ambiguity of being German and yet not looking German- and open resentment- led to reflections on the most prominent group of migrants within Germany and comparisons. They criticised perceived underlying public attitudes when faced with the challenge of integrating migrants. To fully comprehend, this needs to be contextualised further by looking at the discourse surrounding the largest migrant group within Germany.

6.2. Koreans are the ‘Good Foreigners’- the *Kyopo* Success Story

‘Koreans are the good foreigners’, was a statement I often heard from my informants during my fieldwork. Being ‘the good foreigners’ means that there are ‘bad foreigners’,

and those are identified as the Turkish minority. *Kyopos* refer to the parent generation of Turks as ‘Anatolian peasants’ which implies a variety of different issues. A closer look at these implications helps beginning to explain how the *kyopos* contrast themselves with the Turkish minority. The *kyopos* are the ‘good foreigners’, while the Turkish minority make up the ‘bad foreigners’ that provide the foil for the educated, middle-class Korean minority. In short, the *kyopos* stand for everything that the Turkish minority is not; they are everything that is ‘good’ and ‘desired’ in foreigners.

Within the above framework, *kyopos* see themselves as having achieved all that a migrant second generation can achieve to integrate. They have successfully negotiated the pitfalls of conflicting cultures and found a resolution, showing the outward signs of success, such as educational success. Klaus, like all my informants, sees his future in Germany, where he lives, works and has friends and family. He, and others, frames himself in terms of civic citizenship. “Korea is far away,” he said, “and what our parents tell us about Korea doesn’t exist anymore. That makes it our parents ‘Korea’, doesn’t it? We go to Korea on holidays; our lives are here.’ Hence, Germany is ‘home’.”

Kyopos stress the way they have come to adopt German values, explain their success by stressing the perceived similarity between German and Korean values to explain their own success. Using the image of the ‘Good Foreigner’, *kyopos* talk about themselves as having all the qualities desired by the majority society. “Koreans are cleverer than Turks, more intelligent, more diligent, better...” was how one of my informants summed up the success of the *kyopos*. He went on to doubt that the national crime statistics even had a number for *kyopos*⁷⁹, pointing out the educational successes of the *kyopos* again; *kyopos* are the opposite of the Turkish minority.

However, in the majority society discourses, the *kyopos* play a marginal role, and it is of little significance here, whether or not German society truly regards them in such a positive light. What is important here is the process of imagining themselves, as they are seen by others. “Identity is actually something formed through unconscious processes over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth. There is always something ‘imaginary’ about its unity. It always remains incomplete, is always in process. [...] Identity arises not so much from the fullness of identity, which is already inside us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness which is filled from outside us, by

⁷⁹ It doesn’t, incidentally.

the way we imagine ourselves to be seen by others.” (Hall, 1996:287). Thus, narrating how the *kyopos* imagine the majority society sees them is a form of active imagining and positioning within the perceived discourses on integration and identity. To further explain the positioning of the *kyopos* within the discourse and highlight their success, I look at four themes: Secularism, language fluency, educational success, and the position and treatment of women. These four topics are a source of particular pride to the *kyopos* and situate them directly within the discourse on ‘good’ and ‘desired’ foreigners. It opposes *kyopo* modernity to Turkish backwardness, elevating the status of the second generation within the hierarchy of foreigners (Mandel, 2008).

One of my informants was a founding member of the committee that organized the *kyopo* parties. As mentioned previously, most of the first generation in Germany either attended or attends various Christian churches, holding services in Korean. According to my informant, and others, the evangelical churches, once a meeting point for the second generation, had a tendency to splinter into different congregations⁸⁰, frequently interrupting second-generation social networks, and at the exclusion of the Catholic second-generation. Most of my informants told me that they attended church mainly to meet their *kyopo* friends, having little or no interest in the actual (Korean-language) services, or being more interested in attending a church of their own choosing. Many of my informants identified as agnostic, atheist or apathetic, while others were believing, or nominal Christians. The co-founder of the party-committee told me that “one of the reasons we started these parties was to get everyone together, away from church, to have a space where we can socialize freely.”

While no one ever said it overtly, the secular nature of socializing, and most of all the willingness to leave religion out, can be constructed as ‘modern’ and ‘German’, when contrasting it with the perception that the Turkish minority clings on to Islam as a justification for perceived backwardness. In socializing, *kyopos* rejected the constraints of religion, as the bulwark of negative tradition, while accepting the implicit Christian foundation of secularism (Asad, 1993).

Fluency in the German language is a key way that the *kyopos* use to distinguish themselves from the Turkish second or third generation. At the party Klaus and Jens

⁸⁰ The reasons behind these splits varied, ranging from theological arguments to such of a more private nature.

repeatedly pointed out that ‘they don’t even speak German properly’. The *kyopos* on the other hand speak excellent German and are by and large native speakers. If German language, as Friedrich Merz (Schuhmann in Kavoori and Fraley, 2006:96) noted, is one of the three elements of German *Leitkultur*, then the *kyopos* have successfully mastered this element, while the Turkish minority hasn’t. The explanation behind the fact that most *kyopos* are native speakers, I have given in the previous chapter. What should be noted here though, is the making of a myth, reiterating parental sacrifice, and the parent generation’s willingness to be ‘good foreigners’ by making German the main language at home. Learning German was seen as an investment into the future, once more opposing the backwardness of the Turkish minority, not to say their unwillingness to sacrifice and adopt German, with the progressiveness and thereby success, of the Korean minority.

Another element of the *kyopo* success story is education. 34% of all children in Germany attend gymnasium and leave school with the *Abitur*, a high-school qualification which enables them to go to university. Among the Turkish minority only 10% of people of Turkish descent, and 2% of Turkish citizens in Germany obtain a university degree⁸¹. Almost all of my informants, with one exception, had gone through higher education, obtaining a university degree. Even that one exception however had still taken the necessary university entrance exams, *Abitur*. Compared to the Turkish minority, the educational successes of the *kyopos* are astounding⁸². Most of my informants explained the educational success with the Confucian influence, which the parent generation transmitted to the second generation, in which the poor scholar is better than the rich merchant. However such pride also stemmed from the previously mentioned educational hierarchy in Germany, and the admiration for the *Bildungsbürgertum*⁸³, and the ascribed lack of migrant *Bildungswille*, and its underlying racial assumptions. Stressing education repeatedly therefore can be seen as an attempt to transcend racial hierarchies.

My informants agreed that the above tenets made them upwardly mobile, while the Turkish minority remained backwards, socially static. To highlight the difference, they

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[http://www.jugendsozialarbeit.de/jsa/bagkjs/bagkjs.nsf/\(Themen\)/8c7bd2aadcbcdf2c12574fa00396a85!OpenDocument&AutoFramed](http://www.jugendsozialarbeit.de/jsa/bagkjs/bagkjs.nsf/(Themen)/8c7bd2aadcbcdf2c12574fa00396a85!OpenDocument&AutoFramed)

⁸² According to Beckers-Kim (2005) 95% of all *kyopos* have an *Abitur*.

⁸³ Comparer Chapter 4 “Yellow Angels”

contrast the first generation women's situation to that of Turkish women, who are all seen as housewives and mothers, who never had to work in the majority society's world, never had to learn German properly, and hence did not raise their children appropriately. Neither Jens, nor Klaus are alone in this perception. The first generation nurses are talked about as 'pioneers' and 'heroines' and the qualities of courage and determination are prized. Unlike the Turkish first generation women, the first generation Korean women were conceptualized as educated and future-oriented women, who influenced their children's lives for the better. My female informants added that they stressed education for daughters. At the heart of this seems to a contradiction, insofar as that in informal chats about home and growing up, my informants were less flattering about their mothers' different treatment for sons and daughters. However, in the unflattering comparisons made with the Turkish minority women, my informants glossed over what they considered minor, personal quibbles, which did not detract from the heroic narrative of brave pioneers that partly explained their own success. Compared to that, the Turkish minority women are perceived as voiceless, uneducated and oppressed. *Kyopo* men and *kyopo* women consider themselves equal. *Kyopo* women are not overtly oppressed, as the Turkish girls and women are conceptualized to be, but are educated, modern women who make their own choices.

The *kyopos* are situating themselves within a majority-society led discourse to explain a perceived acceptance of German society for them. In the formal interview, Klaus employed the official discourse, telling the success story of the *kyopos*, as tale of migrant children that portrays modernity and integration. Educated, eloquent and middle-class, in the formal interview, Klaus reiterated the model of 'co-existence', showing his affluence and success, and thereby the *kyopos*' success, by inviting me to an elegant bar, rather than a café or a pub. Korea was the past, Germany is the future, and 'our lives are in Germany'. He situated himself very clearly, asserting his position as one of the successful *kyopos*, being eloquent, affluent and repeatedly refusing my offers to pay for his drink as a small sign of appreciation for letting me interview him. On the contrary, he insisted on footing the bill and being gentlemanly in holding doors and chairs for me. In the model that politician Friedrich Merz suggested, his treatment of me, as a woman, clearly defined his enlightened masculinity that fitted into the German model, opposed to the Turkish minority. Klaus made his priorities clear and repeatedly assured me that 'our lives are in Germany'. Yet within the formal setting a

question lingered uncomfortably: Why do Germans need to integrate into German society?

6.3. Remaining foreign in spite of being ‘good’- *Kyopo* everyday experiences of being an *Ausländer*

So far, much has been made of the self-description ‘*kyopo*’, as an alternative to monolithic conceptions of ‘Germanness’ and ‘Koreanness’. But, even though its meaning has altered for the *kyopos*, at its heart lies a sense of ascribed foreignness. In this section, I look at everyday experiences of being conceptualized as a ‘foreigner’. This needs to be contextualized by looking at hegemonic ideas of German ethnicity, and how ethnic Germans perceive Germans of other ethnicities. Particularly looking towards the Afro-German⁸⁴ experiences will help shedding light onto the *kyopo* experience of being ‘othered’ and perceived as a foreigner. This also raises the question of ethnic expectations that come with being ‘othered’. The discourses surrounding ‘looking German’ furthermore necessitate a closer look at gender, and the way in which foreigners are gendered.

While the *kyopos* utilize the official discourse and situate themselves as successful within it, creating a hierarchy of migrants based on it, at the same time they share many experiences with other migrant groups. Yet, the societal discourse on migration and integration disregards the very real implications that prevailing attitudes towards migrants have. Pushing integration debates into the cultural realm does not defuse situations of everyday discrimination or the feeling of being rejected by the majority society. These are experiences the *kyopos* make in everyday life, being reminded that they are visible, easily identified as foreigners, meaning that they don’t truly belong and need to justify their presence.

As previously mentioned, constantly being asked where one comes from ‘originally’ was a point of shared experience, and connection between *kyopos*. Annoying or amusing as my informants found these instances, while subtly serving as a reminder of phenotypical difference, the majority of my informants claimed to never have

⁸⁴ Cf Opitz (1986) and El-Tayeb (2003), ‘Afro-German’ is a self-description that the Afro German minority and academic literature uses.

encountered overt racism. Being called “*Schlitzauge*” [slit-eyes] as a child by other children was the experience the majority of my informants cited as instances for experiencing overt ‘othering’. Another shared experience was, Frankfurt being a magnet for tourists, waiters and shop-assistants addressing my informants in English, assuming that they were tourists. Tales like Anne’s were common:

“I was trying to find my way around [part of town], and must have looked a bit lost, so a guy approached me and asked me in English, if he could help me. It was so obvious that he was German, but he was nice and I didn’t want to embarrass him, so I played along.”

Or Christina:

“The waiter thought he was being nice and polite speaking English to me. He looked really stunned [*vedutzt*] when I answered him in German. But then he also thought it was funny. [*Aber dann fand er’s auch witzig*]”

The *kyopos* do not look German, but are othered. They are visible and therefore identifiable as ‘the other’. Visualism of this sort, marks the ideological process, which reduces race and ethnicity to physical properties so that ‘ways of looking’ become ‘ways of being’ (Yue, 2000:178) that are imposed from the outside. “They,” according to Johanna, meaning the Germans, “cannot distinguish between the different nationalities. They can’t tell a Chinese or Thai from a Korean.” While this is a generalization and a stereotype in itself, Johanna refers to the experience of being labelled ‘Asian’ or ‘Chinese’, rather than ‘Korean’ or ‘*kyopo*’, which she resented. However, in Germany, stereotypes about Asians, as my informants experienced them as children, were conflated to stereotypes about the Chinese. Such stereotypes can be found when looking at a particular children’s song that I had to sing in school, when I was a child. A non-representative poll amongst friends and acquaintances, and my informants told me that they all had to sing this song. The lyrics go:

“Three Chinese with a double-bass,
sitting on the street chattering,
then came the police: What is happening here?
Three Chinese with a double-bass.”

There are eight stanzas to the song, which repeats the same lyrics over and over, consecutively replacing the vowels with the monophthongs found in the German language, i.e.: a, e, i, o, u, ä, ö, and ü. Whether this has any educational value or not, as a child, I shared the experience of having to sing this song with the majority of friends, acquaintances and informants. While few of the ethnic Germans ever thought much by it, for the *kyopos*, this song has the implication that a gathering of three Chinese men with a musical instrument, who do something innocent, already causes a public disturbance and requires policing. Thus, having often been identified as ‘Chinese’, *kyopos* learned as children that their presence required justification and was out of the ordinary, while their peers learned that this was normal.

A group that poignantly shares the same predicament, yet is devalued by the *kyopos*, as Alex pointed out at the party, are blacks in Germany, or Afro-Germans. People who are visibly identifiable as ‘the other’ are regarded with caution to the extent that ‘Afro-Germans, Asian Germans, Sinti Germans and other hyphenated Germans seem not to count as part of the German population’ (Opitz, 1992:136). For most of these groups that means that in spite of their citizenship and having grown up in Germany, they are not recognized within society and because they appear to be foreigners they are most often treated as such, being made to feel that they do not really belong. Asante (Asante in Blackshire-Belay, 1996) underlines this situation with an anecdote, when the then German Chancellor Kohl replied to an African German’s question by speaking of the way his government was dealing with immigrants, whereupon the querist reminded him that he was a German. However to the chancellor, he did not look German, having internalized the racist conception of Germanness. *Kyopos* face the same challenge in everyday life, not looking German, and being identified as foreign and treated accordingly. Thus, integration is still perceived of more as a one-sided process of foreigners accommodating themselves to German society than as a reciprocal process of mutual rapprochement in which German society must also find a new identity, one not based on exclusion and separation (Opitz, 1992).

Yue (2000) recounts a conversation with an Afro-German that almost word for word repeats what Johanna recounted, ending with: ‘But you don’t look German (2000:175).’ Not looking German and having that pointed out to them is an experience the *kyopos* share with the Afro-Germans, who from childhood onwards realize that their

background is seen as unusual. Thus, on grounds of their appearance, they are forced to grapple with their identity in German society, a society that essentially considers itself white. In fact, it is almost impossible for both Afro-Germans and *kyopos* to meet the expectations of those that have them, but speak perfect German, have German names and live a very normal everyday German existence (1992:141). Schultz in Opitz (1992) quotes an interview she conducted with Afro-German women, where one of them says:

“...people find you interesting because of your colour, and because they expect that there’s an exciting story behind it. A lot of people assume that I have a particular relationship to Africa, even when I explain that I have never lived there. They tell me that they were in Africa, took a drumming workshop, and are fascinated with how Africans dance...I always wonder why they’re telling me this. (1992:149)”

Many of my informants narrated the same or similar experiences. ‘Koreanness’ becomes externalized, raising an expectation of being different, placing the onus of accepting that difference and acknowledging one’s foreignness upon the othered. Conversely, ‘Koreanness’ used to be most often identified with ‘Chineseness’, although only roughly 6000 people of Chinese origin live in Germany (Yue, 2000:186). Different Asians are often homogenized into one monolithic concept that is ‘Asian’ (Espiritu, 1997). In Germany, ‘Asian’ is often identified to be synonymous with Chinese. What is Chinese is seemingly identified easily thanks to an abundance of Chinese restaurants, sporting red lanterns, golden dragons and sometimes pavilion ceilings (Yue, 2000:186). Yet, these interior designs reflect the German idea of what ‘Chinese’ looks like, being designed by German interior designers, whereas more subtle designs are considered ‘inauthentic (2000:186)’.

When discussing the negotiations of identity amongst second generation Chinese and Korean Americans, Kibria (2000) makes the point that her informants only became aware of their difference via expectations of ethnic knowledge, requiring the need to explain themselves. For the *kyopos* these ethnic expectations extend to being asked whether they speak Korean, or people assuming that they must be good at Taekwondo. “People are shocked when I tell them that I don’t speak Korean.” Johanna commented on such expectations. “They find that incredible. Or Taekwondo. It’s not like we’re all masters at that, is it? Can you do Taekwondo?” She and others laughed such instances off, calling the Germans silly for such expectations, at the same time the laughter often wore thin and bitter.

Others recounted similar experiences. Sarah said that:

“people find you exotic and interesting, and are always curious. Where are you from? How long have you been here? It can be annoying, so I deal with it by telling them that my parents are Korean, but I am German.”

Constantly being faced with the expectation of difference, being displaced within one's own society, leads to different strategies of adaptation. At its worst this means internalizing the racism directed at them (Opitz, 1992:140). Many Afro-Germans respond to the racism of their society by attempting to adapt to societal stereotypes that determine the image of Blacks, allowing themselves to be cast as affable, spirited, funny and wild types who add flavour to the lives of white people (1992:141).

The majority society has ethnic expectations and also judges the authenticity of those they have ‘othered’. *Kyopos* are judged on the basis of their looks and are not only expected to be different, but different in a way that will support preconceived notions and prejudices. *Kyopos* may be ‘the Good Foreigners’, and situate themselves within the discourse of successful integration, comparing themselves to the Turkish minority, but they are still foreigners. Telling, however, is the fact that Johanna and others often used blatant stereotypes and generalizations about the ‘silly Germans’, as a way of coping with the sense of displacement.

At the party, in a space removed from everyday life, a space in which the ethnic expectations from the outside were removed and replaced with own expectations, those identified as ‘Germans’ were considered an intrusion. The ‘potatoes’ could be identified visually analogous to the way *kyopos* are usually identified as ‘the Other’. The felt gaze that *kyopos* feel in everyday life, demanding justification for their presence, in this case turned against the present Germans, who were seen to be intruding. One could say that the Germans became the *Ausländer*, the ones that do not belong on the basis of their phenotypical appearance, and the ethnic expectations that come with them. In this sense, it was a reversal of roles, and the subsequent conversation that revealed the complexity of the *kyopos*’ situation. Contrary to what Klaus said in the formal interview, it depends on more than two categories. It situates the *kyopos* not between German and Korean, but within a much broader framework, in which discourses on German and non-German,

backwardness and modernity, good and bad, masculinity and femininity, and ethnic expectations play out.

Klaus, at the party, in contrast to the interview setting, did not stress the idea of co-existence, but openly denounced the presence of Germans. He claimed that they were “taking over” and “not participating”. Again, one could say that he was situated within a particular discourse, however this time, his choice of words sounds reminiscent of calling the Turkish minority ‘unintegrable’ and refusing to participate in German society. “Not one of them is dancing,” Klaus complained. In short, the present non-*kyopos* failed to assimilate, and hence could not be integrated into the normal proceedings of the party. However, they could not be part of that party, because they were immediately identified as ‘the Other’.

Jens pointed out to him that the party was indeed open to the public, and described all *kyopos* present as ‘rice-potatoes’, returning in a joking manner to the idea of a hyphenated identity, akin to ‘Asian-American’ or ‘Afro-German’. He qualified his statement quickly though by claiming that the non-*kyopos* were only there for the cheap beer, after no one picked up on his conciliatory attempt. My fieldwork notes say that the atmosphere was uncomfortable, mirroring what Klaus said about the present Germans ruining the atmosphere. No one truly wanted to engage with the fact that non-*kyopos* were present. Thus the conversation turned to the safer and established discourse on the *kyopos* being ‘the good foreigners’, and the hierarchy of migrants within Germany. In short, the experience of rejection came to the fore when the minority/majority roles were reversed, but the coping strategy was to participate in the dominant discourse, and accepting the underlying racist assumptions as providing enough leeway for continued success.

6.4. ‘I even have Chopsticks’- Gendered Limitations of transcending Foreignness.

In this section, I look at the construction of ethnicity along gendered lines, which renders a particular group as a whole effeminate, to contextualise the events at the *kyopo* party. The dominant discourse on masculinity is a discourse on German masculinity, from which the *kyopo* men feel excluded on the basis of being ‘othered’.

German masculinity is modern, compared to backwards Turkish masculinity that oppresses women. It is constructed as opposed to an atavistic, juvenile, Islamic, suppressive and so forth Other masculinity (Schuhmann, 2006:95).

The discourses of progressiveness and atavism are often symbolized in the icon of the Western white emancipated woman and the gender-sensitive white man. The assumedly natural born chauvinistic non-Western man and his victimized Other woman serve as contrast foils for white phantasms of their own advanced civilization (Schuhmann, 2006:91). Unlike the Turkish minority, Asians do not quite fit into this framework, but are feminized. Chan (1972:68) writes about the stereotype of the emasculated Asian man that,

“The white stereotype of Asians is unique in that it is the only racial stereotype completely devoid of manhood. Our nobility is that of an efficient housewife. At worst we are contemptible because we are womanly, effeminate, devoid of all the traditional masculine qualities of originality, daring, physical courage, creativity.”

Kyopo men can claim modernity through their treatment of women, but within the discourse on masculinity they are emasculated, fitting neither the idea of real German men, nor being the threatening Other man. There is neither a positive nor negative definition for *kyopo* masculinity within this discourse. The conflation of societal discourses and of discourses on masculinity that restricts *kyopo* men’s agency: On the one hand, they do not fit the definition of German masculinity due to their physical appearance, on the other hand, claiming the opposing masculinity, which is constructed as threatening, oppressive and mainly Turkish, would undermine their claim to successful integration and modernity.

In the absence of ‘bad’ *kyopo* masculinity, in the perception of the majority society, the position of *kyopo* women is dependent on German notions of women and femininity. *Kyopo* women are subject to the same ideas that circumscribe German femininity, but they are also othered. While Asians in general are considered gentle and effeminate, Asian women in particular are subject to an ongoing process of orientalization. Some of my female informants regarded these experiences as positive, as making them “more interesting”. Johanna, in a previous chapter, related how she would call herself “Korean” while studying abroad, using her “exoticness” to her advantage. Positioning herself as Korean, she felt, gave her an advantage over other Germans.

This incident is telling about how identities are situational, and depend upon positioning, however other situations shows the limits of free positioning. Most of my female informants had a few stories to tell about dating experiences with German men, which are telling. Johanna told me about an incident, where she had met a seemingly nice young man at a party.

“[...] So I told him that my parents came from Korea. He invited me for dinner, and told me: ‘I even have chopsticks!’ What do you say to that? I have a knife and fork at home? Can you tell me what he was expecting? What was that all about?”

Christina told me about a proposed blind date.

“My friend told him that my parents were from Korea, and said to me that his response was, that Korean girls always have such pretty hair and skin. I wasn’t impressed. It just rubbed me the wrong way.”

Sophie:

“A friend of a friend was quite drunk at a party. He told me that he normally doesn’t go for Asian girls and doesn’t find them pretty at all. As in, none of them. Right, because goodness knows how many billion women all look the same! And then, he told me that I am the only exception, because I’m really, really pretty. What? Seriously? I should have said that I don’t normally go for idiots, but you’re really pretty too.”

My informants laughed such incidents off, as ‘guys being stupid’, but beyond the awkwardness of misguided mating behaviour, there is racial stereotyping, and objectification at play. In this context, one of Johanna’s assertions- that Germans can’t distinguish between a Thai woman and a Korean woman- is particularly important. Looking at Thai women, and how the majority society perceives them, will make the importance clearer.

In Germany, the prevalent image of Thai women is that of a ‘mail order bride’, once she is within Germany. Thailand itself evokes images of German men going on sex-tourism trips to Bangkok. Although the number of Thais constitutes a small fraction of all foreigners in Germany, the overwhelming majority of Thai women migrate either as sex workers or as wives. Since 1975, increasing numbers of Thai women have migrated to Germany with their German husbands (Piper, 2003:54). The majority of these Thai women are badly educated, expresses little interest in learning German and intend to

return to Thailand eventually (Piper, 2003). They are known as ‘mail order’ or ‘catalogue’ brides, which has acquired pejorative meanings.

The mail-order bride business celebrates the myth of oriental, subservient femininity, boasting that Asian women are faithful, docile and exotic (Simons in Kelson & DeLaet, 1999:132). Dating websites offer explanations for the growth of the mail order bride industry. Free information on the internet gives advice ‘for the purpose of helping men’, and explain that more men want mail order brides today because of men’s unhappiness with Western women (Simons, 1999). Men, apparently cannot find the kind of wives they want, because the women have chosen for themselves a career path other than that of wife, for which the feminist movement is to blame (1999:129). The white women’s movements have created a backlash for which patriarchy is taking issue in justifying the conquest of Third World women (Tolentino, 1996).

One ad, quoted in Simons (1999) reads: “Congratulations, you have taken the first step toward discovery of an eternal treasure that will happen when you find your number one Asian lady, whose main objective in life is to please her husband. The enthusiasm shown and the pleasure they derive in accomplishing this goal is almost embarrassing.” But it is only ‘almost embarrassing’, not plainly wrong in objectifying an Asian woman. The position of women in the business is clarified in another ad that asks: “Where else will you find a girl who will clean your toenails with a toothbrush?” (Meng, 1994).

Notably, the Asian woman here becomes a ‘girl’, not an adult, and her position is quite clearly at her husband’s feet. The Asian ‘girl’ is not a “modern European women in the twenty-first century” (Schuhmann, 2006:97) that real German men need no enlightening in dealing with, but a childlike object that delights in submission and knows her place. Notably in two of the above examples from my informants, the men used the word ‘girl’ to refer to the women, who very much consider themselves ‘modern European women in the twenty-first century’, and not ‘Asian girls’ that conform to the stereotypes their conversation partners possibly had in mind.

A stark example for the objectification of Asian, and especially Thai women comes from a German dating website. The site puts great stress on how Thai women like to “spoil their husbands”, which makes them “the best sort of woman you could wish for”. Thai women are praised as “positive women, very friendly, always entertaining and a

true addition to your family.⁸⁵” The blatant stereotyping in the first part of the latter sentence aside, ‘they are a true addition to your family’ [*Eine wahre Bereicherung für die Familie*] is a phrase usually used in Germany to describe the acquisition of pets. The language used commodifies Thai women, reducing them to the status of, albeit generally beloved, animals, like loyal dogs who faithfully obey their master’s commands. “Women in Thailand are different than other women,” the German site cited above claims, and goes on to say: “not only because of skin colour and looks, but an important part of being different is their culture and their attitude towards life.” As one continues reading the site, Thai women are praised for being family-oriented, helpful, friendly and respectful towards their husbands. In short, they are the antithesis to ‘other women’, which presumably in this context means German women. The mention of skin colour, combined with ‘attitude to life’, which is clarified as meaning ‘spoiling their husbands’, makes the Other woman a commodity that does not belong to the German collectivity, and hence treatment of her does not define German masculinity. The Other woman in this case becomes the object of powerful fantasies of conquest, whose homeland becomes “every single man’s paradise, where the main activity is chasing and conquering the fairer sex” (Tolentino, 1996:69). She becomes an object for a fantasy in which a German man “always has the upper hand in dealings with Asian women” (1996:69).

“Women are usually the creatures of a male power fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all, they are willing.” Said (1978:207) writes about the project of Orientalism, and the Other woman. This stereotype informs Johanna’s stereotype on several levels. On the one hand, she asserts that Germans as a whole are unable to distinguish between different ethnicities when it comes to Asians, on the other hand, she refers to a stereotype about Thai women, which she opposes with Korean women’s moral superiority. One of Hyung’s (2008) informants, who is a German-Korean actress, says:

“It is another disadvantage that I am only ever seen as an Asian woman. Alas, that is a big problem. That’s why I no longer attend castings where I would need to play a Thai prostitute. It doesn’t matter how well I could play the role, I just don’t look like a Thai woman.” (2008:154)

⁸⁵ http://www.kontakte-thaifrau.de/?Thaifrauen_Informationen

Being mistaken for a Thai woman is considered insulting by *kyopos*, as it implicitly challenges their success of integrating and the successful identity they construct for themselves. Being labelled ‘Thai’ calls into question the morality, education and language skills of *kyopo* women, means slipping in the hierarchy of migrants and suddenly no longer being recognized as ‘the good foreigners’. It means being devalued, explicitly objectified and considered loose. Thai women are the negative Other women to *kyopo* women, who are educated, successful and modern.

For *kyopo* males the implications of having ‘their’ women tarred with the same brush as Thai women adds insult to injury. They are emasculated in majority society, considered effeminate and seen to be lacking the perceived masculine traits of aggressiveness and authority, while ‘their’ women are the objects of male fantasies for other men. At the *kyopo* party my informants repeated the statement that the non-*kyopos* were only present “to check out the girls.” Jens’s conciliatory statements about the beer as a motive for their being there did nothing to make their presence less dubious. Aware of their own status, my circle of informants felt threatened by the German men, and suspected them of having come for sexual adventures. My informants’ grumblings grew loud when they observed those they had identified as ‘German’ watching the dancers rather than participating. In the framework of the objectification of Asian women, they commented on what they observed by objecting to it. Their presence obviously was no threat to the Germans, who did not accord them masculinity anyway, while the Germans were there to ‘check out’ the sexualized Asian women. In this case it was the way that my informants perceived ‘their’ women to be positioned that belied the success story of integration. Instead, the *kyopo* men felt marginalized and proceeded to comment to ‘just wait till it gets late enough and they’re drunk enough to dance’. This implies Dutch courage⁸⁶, which also by implication, a *kyopo* man doesn’t need, hence asserting a superior form of masculinity.

There is a darker, uncomfortable undercurrent, if one bears in mind Hyung’s (2008) and my assertion in the previous chapter, regarding marriage and relationship patterns among *kyopos*. While these remain to be explored, at the time of my fieldwork, all of my female informants in relationships, had German partners. My male informants were either single, or had a Korean/Japanese girlfriend who was a student at the university.

⁸⁶ Colloquial expression for needing a few drinks to gain courage.

My female informants explained their partner choices in different ways, some like Sophie, being vocal about finding *kyopo* men spoilt, because of doting Korean mothers, others like Sarah explaining that “you can’t choose who you fall in love with”, or “German men don’t expect you to do every little thing for them”. Still others, like Kathrin would have preferred a *kyopo*, but “the choice is limited”. While the fact that all my female informants in relationships had a German boyfriend, partner or husband, goes to show that the majority society isn’t homogenous in its objectification, it appeared to create an underlying tension with the male *kyopos*.

Not only were ‘their’ women the objects of male fantasies for other men, while popular culture denies manhood to Asian men, it endows Asian women with an excess of ‘womanhood’, sexualizing them, but the presence of ‘potatoes’ served as an uncomfortable reminder that even ‘their’ women seemed⁸⁷ to reject them. In this process both sexism and racism have blended together to produce the sexualisation of white racism (Wong, 1978:260). Linking images of Asian men and women, Elaine Kim (1990) suggested that Asian women are portrayed as sexual for the same reason that men are asexual: “Both exist to define the white man’s virility and the white man’s superiority” (1990:70). These underlying currents in conjunction with female partner choices, at the party, manifested in resentment.

The conversation at the party puts *kyopo* women into an awkward position. Cast as sexually available, Asian women become yet another possession of the white man, who are passive, subservient, dependent and domestic (Espiritu, 1997:97). *Kyopo* women are caught between the danger of being stigmatized as stupid, promiscuous and objectified as ‘Asian woman’, and the discourse on being ‘good foreigners’, while at the same time serving as a foil to *kyopo* masculinity. In order to participate in all discourses, *kyopo* women need to assert their superiority by rejecting the socially constructed ideal ‘Asian woman’ in majority society.

Kyopo women are caught between the need to expose the problems of male privilege and the desire to unite with the *kyopo* men to challenge the overarching racial ideology that confines them both. At the same time their achievements as being modern,

⁸⁷ I consciously say ‘seemed’, because of the female voices among my informants who explicitly stated that they would prefer a *kyopo* as a partner.

independent and educated are conflated with *kyoponess* as a whole. This harkens back to Elaine Kim's (1993) stance that it was easy for her as a "Korean American female to accept the fixed masculinist Asian American identity posited in Asian American cultural nationalism, even when it rendered invisible or at least muted women's oppression, anger, and ways of loving because I could see in everyday life that not all material and psychic violence to women of colour comes from men, and because, as my friends used to say, 'No Chinese [American] has ever called me a "gook" (1993:x)

In the next section, I will discuss discourses about German/Korean people. Due to the marriage patterns already mentioned, these discourses deserve a closer exploration.

6.5. 'Treason and other Opportunities'- 'Korean' Racial Prejudices and Articulating Possibility

"May I ask you a personal question?" Melanie was worried. She and her German husband were considering starting a family. "Growing up, did you ever resent your mother?"

Of course I had, especially as a teenager. At the time, everything was so unfair. "That's not what I mean," Melanie said, and hesitating, told me what was truly on her mind. "Did you ever resent her for being Korean? For making you, you know, mixed [*gemischt*]? Wasn't that difficult for you? How did people react? Did you resent her for it?"

While an in-depth discussion about the children of German/Korean⁸⁸ couples would far exceed the scope of this work, it is helpful to use perceptions other *kyopos* have of them as a lens, to better understand the complex discourses at the party, concerning the hierarchy of migrants, and the articulation of *kyopo* identity. In this section, I discuss Korean racial hierarchies, the changing perception of German/Koreans, and the way discussions about them reveal tensions and the possibilities to articulate hybridity.

"My parents would be fine, if I brought a German boyfriend home," Christina told me, "but they would have an apoplexy, if I brought home a boyfriend whose

⁸⁸ I use German/Korean to indicate one German and one Korean parent.

skin was darker than mine. I was friends with an Afro-German, and my mother begged me not to start a relationship with him. She said that it would cause nothing but trouble, and people would look down on me, and therefore her. Which people? Neighbours, church, her friends...It used to be that going out with a German was bad, but people are still prejudiced.”

A few of my female informants told me that their parents would be displeased, especially if they began a relationship with a Turkish-German or an Afro-German. “Koreans are prejudiced”, they would say in the way of an explanation, echoing Klaus, or “it’s to do with Koreans not liking to mix blood”, while others said that concern motivated their parents, like Christina’s, saying that “people [Germans and Koreans] wouldn’t treat us, and possible children, very nicely.”

“It used to be the same way for German/Korean *Mischlinge* [mixed blood children], but now everyone thinks they’re so pretty. Back in Korea, you either have to have plastic surgery or be a mixed-blood-child to become a model. It’s because they have bigger eyes, and look more Western, so they’re considered very attractive these days. Western, but not too foreign. Koreans used to be very close-minded and prejudiced about mixed-blood-children, but now it’s fashionable. Better even if you’re half German and half Korean. Koreans in Korea regard Germany highly, they think it’s cultured, refined, hard-working and exports only quality goods. If you’re half American, half Korean, it’s not so good. Koreans don’t like Americans anymore, because of the military bases in Korea, and the way they act, as if they own the place. But German/Korean is good.”

Like many of my informants, the one quoted above, used the word *Mischling* without hesitation in their description of what they perceived as a Korean hierarchy of acceptable intermarriage. The Korean equivalent to *Mischling* is “*Hon-Hyol- Ah*” [mixed blood child], and unlike my *kyopo* informants, the Korean friends who told me, were keenly aware that it is a derogatory term. The negative implications hark back to the days of the hermit kingdom, the taboo for women to associate with foreigners, and Korean nationalism. The Korean nation is constituted in a narrative centring upon blood and soil, evoking very strong emotional responses. Korean women are symbolic of the nation, embodying the ‘good wife, wise mother’ ideal, which already implies the bearer

of the nation and thus the purity of blood, which will guarantee that Koreans are indeed of one blood. Kim (1998) Thus, jokingly, several of my informants told me that my mother had committed 'treason', when marrying my father and having a *Mischling*. Much eye-rolling accompanied those jokes to clarify that this used to be the parent-generation's stance. But there was ambivalence:

"I used to envy *Mischlinge*. Why? You've got it easier, don't you? It's easier for you to integrate, because you're mixed, because you don't look that different. You're more relatable for the Germans, because you're different, but not too different. Exotic enough to be interesting, but not too exotic, so you fit in easier, don't you?"

Or:

"I think *Mischlinge* have it harder, because you're neither this really, nor the other. The ones I know, I would say, are totally German. But it's like they're missing something, because they're not really completely German. They still look different, they still carry a bit of Korea around. And I think sooner or later, they all start searching, and become interested in Korea."

While it would be interesting to oppose a few German/Korean voices, the point here is not who is right, or indeed if there is a right or wrong, but to illustrate the similarities with the German discourse in chapter 3 about *Negermischlinge* and racial hierarchies, in which the *kyopos* situate themselves, and others. What the discussion about *Mischlinge* shows, are not only the 'Korean' prejudices my informants were always quick to deride, but also an internalized, essentialized notion of what it means to be 'Korean' and what it means to be 'German', which *Mischlinge* seemingly flaunted. German/Korean persons were conceptualized as not feeling "the sharp edges of ethnicity" (Hyung, 2008) as much, as even being "fashionable", and yet oddly deficient. The *Mischling* discussion throws light onto the limits of identity negotiation for *kyopos* from a 'Korean' perspective that is strikingly similar to the German construction of Germanness. 'Koreanness' comes with its own ethno-cultural understanding and racial hierarchy, which resembles 'Germanness' in its essence, and thus seemingly limiting *kyopo* identity. The logical conclusion would be an identity crisis.

But what the discussion also shows, especially Melanie's hesitant questions, is an awareness of the negativity of racial hierarchies, Korean or German, and the attempt to negotiate a changing understanding. Melanie's carefully expressed fear of resentment from her future children with a German, indicates awareness of the negative, racist implications of being cast as a 'mixed blood child', not only by the majority society, but within the Korean minority. The first generation, like Mrs Pak and others, used to think badly of Korean nurses with German men. The second generation are negotiating moving away from Korean racial hierarchies, while trapped in a German one, using German/Koreans, their perceived inherent hybridity and the changing perceptions around them, as a possible gap between the two hierarchies, to articulate ambiguity and possibilities for themselves. 'Korea', in this case, is not the Korea of timeless traditions, but serves as an example for how even this seemingly timeless repository of legitimation can change, questioning the structures that limit *kyopo* identity, and creating room for negotiation and positioning.

The ambiguity and difficulty of articulation was present at the party. Alex said that "Koreans don't like black people, but they like the music," and "only black people really can dance to that [R'n'B music]." He summed up the prejudice and racist expectation in one, and proceeded to point out that "Koreans always think they're better than everyone." Equally, Klaus said that within the setting of the formal interview. "Koreans just have prejudices, left, right and centre." However, again one has to bear in mind the different settings. In the setting of the bar, and in an interview, devaluing the parent generation's prejudices and preconceived notions meant fitting into the discourse on successful migrant integration. He situated himself in opposition to the Turkish example where children seemingly accept the parent generation's ideals and prejudices, and thereby fail to integrate. Klaus was talking about his position within the German hierarchy of migrants.

Jens' statement about 'rice-potatoes' reveals more, in the context of a *kyopo* party. Jokes can be telling about serious, underlying issues, just as the jokes about my mother committing 'treason' were indicative. What the brief discussion of Korean prejudices and racial ideas show, is the tension that the static concepts of Koreanness, and Germanness create, in which the hybridity of 'rice-potato' that German/Koreans are seemingly inherently living, provides an opportunity.

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to show the complexities of identity negotiation within a framework of essentialized identities, imagined outward ascriptions and experienced outward ascriptions, in which *kyopos* position themselves. I argue that the German discourse on integration and identity offered the *kyopos* an opportunity to present themselves successfully *as foreigners*, denying full Germanness. They cannot fulfil the demand of taking on a German identity. Being *kyopo* offers an alternative to monolithic conceptualizations of ‘Korean’ and ‘German’, and negotiates the prevalent rhetoric on culture clashes and identity crises, or “not feeling at home in both cultures” (Hyung, 2008:139). But it fails to question the underlying hierarchies, ideas and gender roles, even though subtly challenging them. Ultimately though, it means being an *Ausländer* in the eyes of the majority society, because: “immigrants carry their foreignness in their faces” (Stolcke, 1995:8).

The politics of identity combine notions of a fixed and inalterable original culture with notions of migration, change and transformation. Nationalist conceptions of identity are simultaneously challenged and conformed to, relying on narratives of an original core culture. (Fortier, 2000:96). Tentatively, and by way of discussing their own racial stereotypes, looking to the change in Korean perceptions of mixed marriages and their children, the second generation engages in articulating ambiguity and possibilities for identity and identification. They are aware of being marginalized in German society, and explore possibilities of situating themselves. If change is possible within the seemingly timeless repository of tradition, i.e.: Korea, the possibility may exist in Germany. It is a possibility particularly pertinent for the second generation of women.

Kyopo men and women experience such issues in different ways. Majority society discourses utilize women as objects rather than as part of society, making Germanness intrinsically male. And the *kyopos* use much of the same discourse to prove their own success. When *kyopo* women speak, gendered difference of experience is pushed to the background. They tend to unite with *kyopo* men against the conceptions and constructions that define them both. But: being *kyopo* is experienced in different ways for *kyopo* men and *kyopo* women. They are both identified as ‘the Other’, but while the

former are desexualized and emasculated, the latter fear being objectified and tarred with the same brush as the stereotypical and racist views of Thai women indicate.

Currently, the *kyopos*- both women and men- are trapped in a discourse that denies them full ‘Germanness’, and offers an opportunity only by accepting the label ‘foreigner’. Full ‘Germanness’ not being flexible enough, or even available as an identity, *kyopo* identity serves not only as a continuation with the parent generation, but also as alternative to “one’s ascription by others” (Jenkins, 1996:20). In this discourse that problematizes foreigners, pitching themselves against the Turkish second and third generation, is a way of making the best of a bad situation, negotiating an alternative identity.

In the next chapter, I will further explore the complexities of identity negotiation among *kyopos*, by looking at a space removed from both the parent generation, and the everyday German environment. By looking at a karaoke bar as a popular spot for socializing, I aim to explain how the *kyopos* synthesize ‘Koreanness’ and ‘Germanness’, as relevant to their lives through performance, creating both community and identity.

7. “Doing Karaoke, Doing Identity”: Performing *Kyopo* Identity

At any first generation Korean gathering in a private home, the place to be if you are a child is in the kitchen. Men, relegated to the living room, sit, drink beer and talk politics, while the women make food, share recipes, exchange the latest gossip and tales about the old days and how it used to be in Korea when they were young. As a child you get the obvious benefit of being pampered, petted and the first to try all sorts of freshly prepared food, and you get the most interesting tales about Korea, and how ‘things’ are done there.

But the timeless parental Korea, where ‘things’ are done in a certain way only exists in tales, in the kitchen and during two hours, on Sunday. Identities are always linked to the context in which they are lived and therefore are dynamic in formation, meaning that they are grounded in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and

practical knowledge (Edensor, 2002:17). Particular places can serve as signifiers of identity, while equally serving as an intersection for individual paths to congregate. Such spaces stabilize social relations in time-space (Gren, 2001:217) and are produced through habit, relying on unreflexive, familiar routines in which meaning becomes sedimented in time as successive social and cultural contexts are materialised, remembered, projected and performed upon space (Edensor, 2002:56).

Having looked at the way in which *kyopo* identity is shaped in the previous chapter by contrasting the second generation with the parent generation, and by interactions with the majority society, in this chapter I look at the way in which *kyopo* identity is constructed and performed in a *kyopo* space. I ask why there is a need for such spaces. I look at the setting of a karaoke bar as a space where *kyopo* identity, away from the first generation and the broader German society, is performed and through performance negotiated. In order to explore this process of negotiation and gain an understanding, I briefly look to narratives about visits to Korea and food, to explore a realization of hybridity among the second generation, necessitating a creative negotiation of identity that encompasses different experiences, not shared with the parent generation. The feeling of discontinuity with the parental 'Korea' and the everyday experiences make the karaoke bar a significant place for the negotiation of identity. I ask how the *kyopos* negotiate identity through performance, and explore the different ways in which they articulate hybridity. To show these different ways, I explore several issues, beginning with embodiment, and the use of language. Gender is a pivotal factor in the setting of the karaoke bar and in the performance of *kyopo* identity, which highlights the possibilities and limitations of *kyopo* identity.

I posit that this is a space where *kyopos* perform and embody that identity. In this space *kyopos* create a 'community of feeling' that exists only in the transient moment of expression and performance and that they *kyopos* therefore seek to reproduce frequently. Through practices of socialibility and singing, *kyopos* strive to create a link between the past and the present. They create a link between perceived tradition and perceived modernity, between 'Koreanness' and 'Germanness', drawing on two forms of identity that are constructed as contrasts and creating a new synthesis. I posit that the negotiation of *kyopo* identity is an ongoing process in which *kyopos* situate themselves between static concepts of 'Germanness' and 'Koreanness' to articulate identity. While

this process is malleable and open to interpretation, I argue that it is both empowering and limiting for women.

7.1.The Karaoke Bar at the *Korea Haus*

The karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus* was a popular place during the time of my fieldwork. Karaoke- meaning literally ‘empty orchestra’ -was invented in Japan, in the 1970s and has since spread all over the world, the available music repertoire, differing from country to country. It is a form of entertainment in which amateur singers sing along with recorded music, using a microphone and a sound system. Usually the song is a well-known pop song, rendered acoustic to replace the voice of the original singer with that of the amateur. Lyrics are displayed on a video screen, usually with a moving symbol or changing colour to guide the singer along.

Both spaces serve as spaces for cultural production, the kitchen at home serves to create continuity, while the karaoke bar is frequented by the second generation, the *kyopos*, only. In the course of my fieldwork, going karaoke- singing was a popular pastime for my informants, with the karaoke bar providing the space for negotiating identity, and a common channel and a focus point for debate and expression of difference. Within this setting, the *kyopos* differentiated themselves both from the parent generation and wider German society, while at the same time difference and continuity were performed and processed.

The importance of this place can only be understood within a certain context and on closer examination of the way the patrons make use of that space, the types of behaviour displayed and the construction of the space itself. The locality is important in not being immediately visible to the outside and also being an important meeting place for the *kyopos* in Frankfurt. Thus it is not only a space in itself but a space that *kyopos* constitute as a stage not only for singing, but for the performance of identity, which is separate from the first generation, removed from and yet connected to the spaces shared with parents.

Other than it being hard to find the karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus* differs from other places in Germany, where karaoke is sung as a special event on special occasions. To

my knowledge and amongst my German friends, karaoke is still regarded as a fad, a test of courage to see who is brave enough and torture everyone else with their singing. By contrast, the karaoke bar is a specialized place where karaoke is sung every night of the week. Inside the *Korea Haus*, it provides a focal point for *kyopos* who live scattered all over Frankfurt and work in diverse places.

My informants described 'karaoke' as a semi-traditional Korean pastime, although they consistently used the Japanese word 'karaoke' to describe it. They told me that the 'traditional' Korean way would combine drinking in a group and singing individually within a social gathering. Later, my use of the word 'karaoke' to describe to first generation informants about this pastime, caused confusion amongst them, where they insisted that 'karaoke' was 'Japanese' only. However they recognized the described setting as '*Norae- Bang*', while the *kyopos* used the word 'karaoke'. In modern-day Korea the word 'karaoke' is used to describe bars of doubtful reputation, mainly catering to Japanese businessmen and male tourists (Otake & Hosokawa, (1998: 186) in Mitsui & Hosokawa (1998)).

During my fieldwork, going out to karaoke bars was part of participant observation research, and the bar I most often went to with informants was inside the *Korea Haus* in Frankfurt am Main. The *Korea Haus* is located close to the main train station and the red-light district in Frankfurt, within easy walking distance to my flat. It serves mainly as a Korean restaurant, a revolving door at the glass front, a flight of stairs downwards towards a large dining room that is slightly too plush and at the same time too utilitarian to feel like a restaurant. At the time of my fieldwork, large fishtanks separated long tables that were lined with rococo-style chairs that were upholstered in burgundy red. Later queries turned out that it mainly caters to large tourist groups from Korea. Being conveniently situated opposite Frankfurt's main train station, well-connected to the airport and close by a large parking lot for tour buses, the restaurant mainly catered to bus tours. However, it also houses a karaoke bar, and amongst my informants going to sing karaoke was a popular form of entertainment.

On a typical evening I'd go there with a friend, who was also an informant, usually Alex, quite late in the evening, sometimes as late as two o'clock in the morning, usually to find familiar faces, such as Kathrin and Jong-Soon, singing karaoke already. In order to get to the bar that is located behind the restaurant, one must cross the entire dining

area- usually darkened in the evenings- for a door at the very back. From the outside, especially late at night, one can easily pass the bar by a thousand times without ever realizing that it is there. Sometimes even the front door to the darkened restaurant is locked, and one must ring the doorbell to gain entrance. It is a hidden place, only for those who know where it is and how to find it, and in that sense an exclusive place, removed from the nightlife around the main train station.

The heavy steel door at the back of the restaurant, past the fish tanks and the cream-coloured faux rococo chairs and tables, leads down a narrow corridor, past the toilets and a door to the left at the end leads into the bar. The bar itself is small and dark, filled with plush sofas in dark colours, arranged in pairs facing one another across a low table. Closest to the door is the counter where one can purchase drinks and request songs. The decoration behind the bar consists of plastic flowers in pinks and light blues, and small figurines, which several of my informants somewhat derisively referred to as “the sort of kitsch Koreans like”, meaning the first generation, rather than *kyopos*.

Towards the far end is a slightly elevated stage with a small TV screen for the singer so that he or she can face the audience, two microphones and a large screen behind the stage, showing the song’s video and announcing the song- number coming up next. While most of the sofas are arranged towards the wall, there are two larger sofas in the middle, lengthwise to the screen and bar, catering for larger groups. The walls are painted in a dark blue, the entire place is dimly lit and usually quite smoky. Smoking is something nearly everyone does. The rules are straightforward: there is a minimum amount one must spend on drinks and no limitation to the amount of time spent on stage singing.

On entering, one habitually greets the bar-staff behind the counter with an indicated bow, not to do so would be impolite. Bowing to the bar-staff who was usually an older man in his late fifties is considered to be natural, as a mark of respect to one’s elders. Once the bar staff returns the bow and indicates towards the sofas, one sits down, the bar-staff comes to take your order and brings ledgers, pens and scraps of paper. Usually patrons choose beer, though the later the night the more popular stronger drinks, such as whisky, become. One chooses a song from the book, writes down the song’s number on the paper and hands it to the bar-staff. My first experience at the karaoke bar, briefly

after settling in Frankfurt, began with my utter astonishment at almost exclusively finding Korean songs in the ledger.

The bar was never too crowded not to find seating space, but was usually well-filled, though always with more men present than women. After entering and indicating a small bow to the elderly man operating the bar and the karaoke machine, we'd find somewhere to sit and greet others. The proprietor would then come to give us the booklets containing the songs and a basket of crisps, taking our drinks order. Generally, beer in jugs was the preferred drink but later at night stronger drinks, usually American whisky or rice wine was drunk.

A little small-talk conducted in German with acquaintances would follow and then we'd choose a song to sing. All conversations were in German, but the majority of songs were in Korean and the behaviour in keeping with 'traditional' Korean socialising. Most of my informants either spoke little or no Korean at all, so conversations in the karaoke bar were held in German. Chats revolved around everyday issues and gossip. The only Korean words in such chats referred to Korean food or spirits, which have no German equivalent. The evening would continue with small-talk, generally enquiring about life, in between rushing up on stage to sing another song. The songs were mainly in Korean, pop-songs that were popular in Korea, recently or not so recently and for most part slow ballads were the favourite ones to be chosen.

Even if someone some of them didn't speak Korean, many of my informants were used to singing along phonetically, due to the prevalence of English pop music in the German charts. Being used to singing along in a language other than German, picking up Korean songs wasn't difficult. But, since I never listened to Korean pop music at home, and unable to speak Korean or read basic Korean, I had to pick from a much smaller exclusively English selection of pop-songs⁸⁹. During my time visiting the karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus*, there were no German songs in the ledgers. It stands to reason whether this was due to explicit design, the general prevalence of English pop music in German charts or importing the tapes from Korea. The latter is the most likely explanation however the bar prided itself with a badly hand-painted sign that it also offered Chinese, Japanese and Thai songs. However, I never found a Chinese, Japanese or Thai song in

⁸⁹ Korean has a rather straightforward phonetic alphabet, which makes it possible to read properly without actually knowing the language. Had I been able then to read the Korean alphabet and known a few songs, I could have sung in Korean as well.

the ledgers⁹⁰. Eventually, while drinking and eating crisps, which are always provided and free of charge, one's number comes up and then it is time to run for the stage to sing. No matter how badly one sang, a song always ended with applause, and returning to socializing and small-talk. Then one returned to one's seat, and chatting and conversation would resume, till it was time to leave.

One evening was different: two young German women came to the karaoke bar. They came with a group of *kyopos* and immediately stood out, being blonde and identifiable as being ethnic Germans. This rendered them visible outsiders. Like me, the two young women could only sing English songs and settled on a fast pop tune to perform together. Both of them went up on stage, laughing and jostling one another. Both of them were visible embarrassed to stand on stage with the lights on them, passing by others who showed frozen smiles.

As a matter of fact, when they approached the stage, everyone around them went silent and watched them. While they were struggling with the long-corded microphones, they were trying to push one another to the front of the small stage. Neither of them seemed to know the song very well and they struggle with the fast pace of the tune, as well as reading the words on the screen quickly enough. In short, they did quite badly, and much worse than anyone else I had ever seen and heard perform at the karaoke bar. It was never unusual for strangers to pick up a microphone to support a struggling singer, but in this case not even the group they were with showed any inclination to help. Soon afterwards, the two young women left without their *kyopo* friends. Once they were gone, the evening continued as normal, as if the interruption had never happened, and no one said anything about it. "They probably didn't enjoy themselves. And there are mostly Korean songs in the books." Alex commented when I asked him what he thought. "Not everyone likes karaoke."

To fully comprehend what happened that evening this event needs to be contextualized by looking at the discourses surrounding *kyopo* identity and the way in which the karaoke bar is used and understood.

⁹⁰ Even without knowing these languages, differentiating Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Thai writing is possible to the trained eye.

7.2. 'And then I realized how German I was' – Experiences of Hybridity

“My elderly neighbour was forever annoying me, complaining to me about this or that, even about the way I walked up the stairs. But it wasn't only her stairwell, was it? So I gave her a piece of my mind. She was so shocked. How dare I? A good Korean girl is always supposed to keep silent and swallow her own opinion, especially when talking to her elders. You're supposed to be respectful, just because they're older than you, and for that they expect you to just roll over [*kuschen*]. That's when I realized how German I am.”

Sophie told me this story about a stay in Korea, while on business. In this section, after having looked at intergenerational relationships, and the process of positioning within a framework of outward ascription, I am exploring another facet to the formation of *kyopo* identity. In order to fully comprehend the complex processes of identity negotiation, it is necessary to explore the 'German aspect' of *kyopo* identity narration, setting them aside from parent generation, adding another aspect that is unique to the second generation. Central to these narratives are experiences of visiting Korea, and the realization that 'Korea' is insufficient as an essentialized point of identification, necessitating a more nuanced approach. I will briefly discuss cultural transmission and transformation by the way of food to illustrate the realization of hybridity, whose negotiation I will further explore in discussing the karaoke bar.

Relative to the first generation, the process of self-identification of second generation children is more complex and often entails the juggling of competing allegiances and attachments (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001:150). By being situated within two cultural worlds, the children of migrants must define themselves in relation to multiple reference groups and to the classifications into which they are placed by their native peers, schools, the ethnic community, and the larger society. Pressure from peers and from parents can tighten the tug of war of ethnic and national loyalties (2001:152). Warner and Strole (in Portes and Rumbaut 2001) introduced their study of an American city as “part of the magnificent story of adjustment of ethnic groups to American life” and went on to predict that “oncoming generations of new ethnics will climb to the same heights [of adjustment]” (2001:45). However the tale of how foreign minorities come to terms with their new social surroundings and are eventually absorbed into the mainstream of the host society, is not as simple and inevitable as Warner and Strole portray it within the American context. The complexity and the transition of second generation identity depends on several factors, such as the history of the immigrant first generation, the

pace of acculturation amongst parents and children and its bearing on normative integration, the barriers, cultural and economic confronted by second generation youth in their quest for successful adaptation, and the family and community resources for confronting these barriers (2001:46). These are precisely the sort of challenges *kyopos* face the negotiation of identity. Narratives of visiting Korea shed a light on the complexity the second generation experiences, which play out in the karaoke bar. These narratives highlight the experience of “difference” and “othering”, where my informants did not quite expect it, leading to questions about belonging, after the expectation of ‘belonging’ in Korea did not come true. Christina said about the first time she visited Korea, when she was twelve years old:

“I remember that the first thing I thought was ‘wow, they all look like me’. Black hair, brown eyes, you know. I thought that that was cool. Meeting my family was really exciting too. I had only ever heard about them, and all the stories about Korea, as it used to be. Guess what, no rice paddies, no pagodas, it was all really urban. It wasn’t at all what I had imagined. It was nice to visit, but it was nice to come home.”

The realization that Korea was not the parental generation’s reflection of Korea, is plain in the above statement. The ‘homeland’ of her imagination, and indeed her parents’ stories, did not exist, and neither did she feel she fitted in. Another informant said:

“I only visited Korea two or three times, and it’s been a while since I went. It doesn’t really draw me back there, although I still have family there. I speak some Korean, and as long as I keep quiet, I can pass for Korean, but in Korea people told me how different, how very different I was. They act differently, and while I think I acted more Korean, than I do in Germany, I was still different.”

My informant had expected to fit in seamlessly, and instead experienced a sense of alienation. The experience of the ancestral homeland became a confrontation with culture. ‘Origins’ combine ‘here’ and ‘there’. The language of origins emphasizes ideas about descent and roots, and substantiates ideas of an authentic, pure, a-historical core culture confined within the borders of the ‘fatherland’. This necessitates a return to the land of origin as a touchstone in the construction of a new identity, Fortier (2000:96) writes. This encounter was not one that mediated ‘Koreanness’ in known and experienced parameters, but one that “is localized, transposed, transformed and translated through the (postmodern) state” (Christou, 2006:146) of Korea. Christou

(2006) writes about return migrants to Greece, who experience a series of negotiations and deconstructions that ultimately lead to a redefinition of their own identities. “In a sense, their own personal plan of action, that is, the return to the ancestral homeland as a triadic project of identification (locating the self), closure (transplanting home) and belonging (eradicating migrancy), becomes a plan unfeasible to implement, a mission impossible and a life-story incomplete” (Christou, 2006:147).

My informants’ narratives were not about a desire to relocate, but about an expectation to fit into the parental Korea that they knew from their parents’ memories, and their own experiences at home, hence the ‘known and experienced parameters’. The result however, was what Christou (2006) calls “a life story incomplete”. Not incomplete as deficient, I argue, but the realization of another facet to my informants’ life story.

Another informant said:

“Growing up, I thought it was exciting to explore both the German and Korean side. I was curious about Korea, and worked for a Korean company for a while. I was in constant conflict with the way things were structured, and how everyone put pressure on the women to always look ‘nice’, like decoration, rather than honouring their hard work. It wasn’t for me. I was too German for that.”

Rather than feeling “incomplete”, my informants experienced their visits to Korea, and their expectations as insufficient to encompass their personal experiences. Essentialized German and Korean discourses of identity are not broad and flexible enough to accommodate the experience of being *kyopo*. Alexandra had a slightly different experience:

“I’ve always been interested in Korea, and enjoyed visiting. It’s fascinating, and I never felt I had any problems fitting in. I think with Korean parents, patterns of behaviour are intuitive. You know what to do, how to do it, and when. But I wouldn’t want to live there. It’s different. I can’t really explain. Maybe, it’s because I’m a tourist. It’s always different when you’re a tourist.”

Alexandra didn’t expect a sense of belonging in Korea, but enjoyed her visits as temporary stays, and identified patterns of behaviour that were familiar. She positioned herself as a tourist, finding both the exotic and the familiar. As a visitor, she felt she fitted in. Others set out to find themselves.

“I lived in America for a while, in a Korean neighbourhood. A real Korean ghetto. Everything was in Korean from TV channels to supermarkets. But the American Koreans are different. [...] I lived there because the rent was cheap, and I suppose, to find out who I really am. As a teenager, I used to feel like a mixture, but after living in a Korean ‘ghetto’ I am in no doubt anymore. I’m German. But that doesn’t change who I am.”

What all these experiences have in common is the realization of hybridity. Parental forms of identification are insufficient for the second generation, who were born in Germany, and live their lives within a German context. Both the parental Korea, if it existed, and present-day Korea are too narrow as sole origin of identity. Yet the parental homeland retains a strong influence on a life lived in Germany.

In his work about young Chinese in Britain, Parker (1995) asserts that “Chinese identity is held within the domestic and family sphere [...] kept within, held in reserve as a source of pride” (1995:102). He writes about the importance of food and eating together as one of the cultural practices that perpetuate Chinese identity. This is true of almost every ethnic identity: that food is central in its transmission. Korean food is one of the ways in which tradition and ‘Koreanness’ are handed down from one generation to the next. *Kimchi* – pickled and seasoned cabbage- traditionally accompanies every Korean meal. In the interviews in which I asked about things my informants stereotypically considered Korean, *kimchi* was one item almost everyone mentioned. Amongst my second generation informants, a liking for *kimchi* is an example sometimes jokingly used to test if someone is Korean or not. Older, more fermented *kimchi* can be turned into a stew called *kimchi jigae*, adding various ingredients, though mostly fish.

Depending on whether you get hungry or sick when you smell it, you’re Korean or not- the joking test goes. Thus, *Kimchi* is a symbolic ‘border guard’ (Armstrong, 1982), which identifies people as members and non-members of a specific collectivity (Yuval-Davis, 2000: 195). Its strong smell, especially when fermented for a long time to make *Kimchi jjigae*⁹¹, can be quite offensive, and my informants considered liking it a Korean trait. But Korean food in Germany was often subject to alterations. The change of food for practical purposes or because Korean chillies were unavailable in Germany to make

⁹¹ The most common form of *kimchi* is made of cabbage, which is fermented with garlic and other spices, and traditionally stored for winter. By the end of winter, it has fermented long enough to turn sour in smell and taste very sour, so that cooking it, usually with the addition of fish, is the only way of eating it. Hence *kimchi jjigae* doesn’t only smell of sour cabbage and garlic, but also of fish.

proper *kimchi* means that the second generation was often faced with ‘Korean-style’ food, rather than what the parents knew in Korea.

Patterson (2000) observed about the Koreans in Hawaii that the second generation there had a similar experience in which Korean foods were integrated into Western food to which they had become accustomed, leading to sometimes strange combinations (2000:129). He cites the example of one girl saying: “I’d like to have milk and a *kimchi* sandwich, please.” A comparable example, in Germany, is *Kim-bab*, which is a type of sushi-roll, usually containing vegetables and fried meat. Inviting an informant for dinner, he asked me if I could make *Kimbab*. I agreed, to which he said: “But you’re doing the sausage version, right? Not traditional.”

The traditional preparation of beef to fill the rolls can be quite time-consuming. As I found out in conversation with other informants, my mother was far from the only Korean mother who substituted *Fleischwurst* (a particular type of mild sausage, usually made from pork) for convenience’s sake. As a result, most of my informants had grown up with the ‘Germanized version’ of this popular dish, and preferred it to the original recipe. *Kim-bab*- the sausage version- thus continues tradition, but the addition of the specific German sausage, adds a layer of differentiation. This makes the shared experience of the dish something unique to the second generation. Or as my dinner guest told me:

“The first time I was in Korea, there was *Kim-bab* for lunch. I thought it was great, until I tasted it. Gah! That’s not real *Kim-bab*! I mean, it’s real in the Korean sense, but, you know what I mean!”

The ubiquitous “you know what I mean”, obviously, only makes sense to someone who is aware of the “sausage version”, i.e.: someone who has grown up in Germany.

Other than these new forms of food, some of my informants also pointed out to me that while food and eating together were places of continuity, they were also places of parent-guided change. Several of my informants told me that their parents took up the German habit of serving *Kaffee und Kuchen* [coffee and cake] for the family every Sunday afternoon. Patterson (2000) makes the same observation about the first generation in Hawaii saying that “the first generation also compromised by introducing coffee at meals and having a Western style breakfast (2000:130)”. Food in its many forms was also one of the ways in which the second generation noted difference from

Koreans living in Korea. These differences set them further apart from ‘Korea’ as a concept known to them by way of parents’ tales. Eating habits have apparently changed in Korea since the first migrants to Germany left, so that many of my informants noted that they were used to eating larger portions of rice in Germany in their parents’ house or on their own. Many said that their relatives in Korea thought of them as ‘old-fashioned’ for asking for bigger servings of rice. Rice used to be the staple, but these days other side-dishes are more numerous⁹². Thus, eating habits that are both changed and continuous, situate the second generation in a tradition yet also mark them as different, locating them within a German context. Far from being a “mission impossible” and a “life story incomplete” as Chrstou (2006) writes about return migrants, experiencing the ancestral homeland, led to a realization of hybridity. This realization of hybridity, which reflects both in narratives of visiting Korea, and in changed eating habits, plays out within the karaoke bar, where performing karaoke, and sociability become a narrative of self-production that encompasses these multifaceted experiences.

7.3. ‘Embodying *kyopo*-ness’ - Bowing and Propriety

In this section I am looking at embodiment and the importance of certain actions within the karaoke bar. These constitute in part, what Edensor (2002) calls “the common sense of dwelling within space”. It is part of a form of cognitive knowing that becomes apparent, especially when challenged, determining who, has access and who does not. In order to do so, I will first examine one of the most intrinsic acts performed within the karaoke bar, and then discuss notions of propriety, and modesty to explore how disruption shows invisible boundaries, and underlying restrictions that determine being *kyopo*.

A space is rendered familiar and homely, through particular actions which create modes of habituation, while at the same time spatial constraints and opportunities which inhere in the organisation and affordances of places mesh with the bodily dispositions

⁹² Korean meals generally consist of a dish of rice and several side-dishes that everyone can help themselves to on the table. More side-dishes of meat etc, mean that one doesn’t need to eat as much rice anymore.

emerging out of routine practices of its inhabitants that become embedded over time (Edensor, 2002:54). This unnoticed framework of practices and concerns is something in which we dwell as ‘habituated body subjects’ (Fortier, 2000:91). Thus, an evening at the karaoke bar followed established patterns, which both continue and discontinue parental notions of ‘Koreanness’ that is lived at home, beginning with the very act of entering into the place. On entering, one habitually greets the bar-staff behind the counter with an indicated bow, not to do so would be impolite. Bowing is an unreflexive act. Bowing to the bar-staff who was usually an older man in his late fifties is considered to be natural, as a mark of respect to one’s elders. Kathrin alongside her friend Jong- Soon- both of whom still lived at home and had their misgivings about Korean elders-, would bow to the barkeeper too, since age confers status in traditional Korean society (Patterson, 2000:144), age itself commanding respect. However the extent of the bow must be carefully measured, so as not to be too subservient, but to establish a respectful, if equal standing. Thus, while acknowledging the status conferred by age, the second generation modifies the traditional deference demanded from younger persons towards their elders.

I discussed bowing with Alex, a *kyopo* student and informant. Neither of us could tell where we had learned and how. The ability to bow seemed nothing that ever needed to be consciously learned. Neither could any of my other informants tell, other than saying that it was something they picked up at home, even though it was far from commonplace. “I sometimes catch myself doing small things that are Korean. I don’t know, small sounds and gestures, nothing overt, but I notice them.” Sarah explained, musing that she had probably picked up such habits in childhood, without consciously remembering. Or, as Alexandra said: “I think with Korean parents, patterns of behaviour are intuitive. You know what to do, how to do it, and when.”

How difficult bowing correctly is actually to accomplish, I managed to observe one day in summer while drinking coffee outside in a café opposite the hotel “Frankfurter Hof”. The hotel staff seemed to be expecting a travel group. A young German woman and a young South-East Asian man, both of them dressed in the hotel’s staff uniform were standing by the entrance, and he was teaching her how to bow. Her trouble consisted in pulling her shoulders up, bowing her back each time she bowed and not keeping her hands folded properly while doing it. By the time the travel group’s bus pulled into the

car-park, the young woman still had not succeeded in bowing without making the young man laugh.

One can ‘identify the small differences in style, of speech or behaviour, of someone who has learned our ways yet was not bred to them’ (Williams, 1961:42). Bodies are trained to adopt dispositions and actions in keeping with certain venues, determining the proper conduct within a certain spatial setting. Being the product of the incorporation of the fundamental structures of a society, these principles of division are common to all the agents of the society and make possible the production of a common, meaningful world, a common-sense world (Bourdieu, 1979:486). Hence, it is understood that in the setting of the karaoke bar- (NB.: not at other *kyopo* social gatherings), bowing is part of the common sense of dwelling within and the performing of identity. It is a ‘stylized repetition of acts’ (Butler, 1990:140) that cultivate a sense of belonging. As it is not something my informants were used to doing at home. Bowing when entering, sets the karaoke bar apart from home, while linking it strongly to tradition. At the same time, the fact that bowing is a gesture that needs to be learned, a gesture that is uncommon in the everyday German environment, more serves as a border guard that regulates access, while literally marking the entrance into a *kyopo* space.

Similarly, jostling and pushing one another on the way to the stage was not part of the common sense of dwelling, but improper. The two young German women attending one evening, clashed with the unspoken rules, their behaviour and their attire, revealing the underlying common sense inherent in the karaoke bar. Their behaviour and clothes opposed Korean Confucian ideas of dignity and modesty, which merit brief examination to put into proper context. As mentioned previously, in passing, in chapter 5, Johanna’s mother constantly told her to dress *ordentlich* [orderly/modestly]. Most of my male and female informants mentioned their parents having instilled a sense of *ordentliche* clothes, which in practice meant nothing too revealing, often muted colours, long trousers, skirts to either to the knee or just above, and for females mostly subtle make-up. Sarah said:

“Who doesn’t want to experiment with clothes, hair and make-up as a teenager? I would have loved to colour my hair, and experiment with what I wear. But whenever I thought I was wearing something fashionable, and it didn’t even have to be revealing, my mother would make me change. ‘You’re not leaving

the house looking *unordentlich*! You always have to look dignified, modest, keeping face and all that. But not cheap either. Your stuff has to be good quality, so people can see.”

Markus:

“I used to get into the biggest fights with my mother, because I was such a rebel. I wore jeans with holes in them, over the knee and such. It was fashionable. Everyone was wearing them. But you should have seen my mother! [Imitates wheezing breathing and angry expression] You can’t go out like that! What are people going to think? That’s a disgrace! People are going to talk about us! Everyone is going to think I didn’t raise you properly if you walk about that *unordentlich*!”

The two German women wore sparkly bright tops and tracksuit bottoms, which although fashionable that year, did not fit into the definition of *ordentlich*, and the idea of traditional Korean attire reflecting modesty and dignity (Yi, 2005). In fact the word *ordentlich* comes from *Ordnung* [order], meaning that something is done within the framework of certain rules, and the two women were disorderly in the sense that their clothes and their behaviour did not accord to deeply held ideas about order. Clothes and behaviour being meant to reflect dignity and modesty, called into question the moral character of the two women- and their whole families, as Markus’ mother’s statements indicated-, threatening the order of the entire place. Dress for the bar was informal, but tracksuit bottoms are considered for exercise and exertion, not for singing publicly, and they are not *ordentlich*. The two young German women broke the unwritten dress-code that confers the status of respectability.

Like me, the two young women could only sing English songs and settled on a fast pop tune to sing together. Again, by doing so they broke the unwritten rules that regulate singing. Singing and drinking being traditional forms of entertainment in Korea, they are nonetheless taken seriously. Hence, the fact that the two young women went on stage loudly laughing and jostling one another again differentiated them sharply from the usual accepted behaviour. Ways of walking, carrying one’s body and sitting continue to be infused with resonances about appropriate comportment (Edensor, 2002:94). The two young women broke the “normative kinds of manners or etiquette,

which instantiate what forms of conduct are appropriate in particular contexts [...] which constitute shared worlds of meaning and action” (Edensor, 2002:94). Edensor (2002) calls this ‘expressive competence’, which the two young women clearly did not possess, showing it by laughing loudly and pushing one another. According to Bourdieu (1979) the two young German women could be said to have “scandalously flouted common sense”, by going challenging “the principles of the incarnate social order” (1979:474) inherent in the setting of the karaoke bar.

The failure to conform to accepted norms may appear trivial, but according to Bourdieu those in power “extort the essential while seeming to demand the insignificant (1977:95)”, as it was that evening, when the two young German women attended, who disrupted “the production of a common, meaningful world, a common-sense world” (Bourdieu, 1979:486). Their presence, their lack of cognitive knowledge of *kyopo* spaces, threatened “the continuity in ways of doing things” (Edensor, 2002:56). Alex’s comment at the end, saying how they probably just did not enjoy themselves is revealing. It trivializes the events. The triviality of many of the things people do, doing what ‘proper’ and ‘good’ people should, not only block them from consciousness since they constitute acts of utter common sense, but also serve to trivialize protest (Cowan, 1991:181). By saying that they maybe just did not like it and that not everyone does, he restored the common sense of the space and defused the challenge the two women might have presented.

7.4. ‘Speaking German, Singing Korean’ - *Kyopo* Language Use in the karaoke bar

In this section I am looking at the use of language in the karaoke bar, and its significance for performance of identity. Conversations amongst the *kyopos* were in German, but the majority of songs were in Korean and the behaviour in keeping with ‘traditional’ Korean socialising. Yet at the same time, the word ‘karaoke’ was used, rather than the Korean ‘*norae bang*’, marking it as a *kyopo* hybridity rather than wholly Korean space.

However, it is not ‘Korean tradition’ that is instantly recognizable to Koreans from Korea, or even the parent generation, but ‘Korean tradition’ as defined by the *kyopos*.

Employing German, while socializing in a perceived traditional Korean way, is particular to the *kyopos*. Language is often considered crucial to the development of ethnic identity. Kibria's (2000) work on identity negotiations of second generation Chinese and Korean Americans, deals with language as a cultural marker of ethnic membership. She observes: "Given its potency as a cultural marker of ethnic membership, it is not surprising that language figured prominently in the second generation's experiences of their expected ethnic knowledge. Those who did not speak much Korean or Chinese were particularly conscious of the power of this expectation (2000:90)." The expectation Kibria (2000) refers to is the expectation of American society assuming ethnic difference to indicate certain knowledge or lack thereof, e.g.; not being able to speak fluent English.

The same expectation can be found in Germany. Language, and particularly the discrepancy in the languages used inside the karaoke bar, are significant. The bar being a place for *kyopos* and not the parent generation, both languages are used but in different activities. Conversations are held in German, but most of the songs chosen were in Korean. As Appadurai (1991) suggests it is a space for the creation of difference in several ways, providing a space for the negotiation of identity as different from the parent generation as well as different from the larger German society. The expectation of performing 'Koreanness' is reflected in the choice of songs and one evening a young woman asked me outright in considerable wonder why I never sang Korean songs. She was surprised to hear that I couldn't. I never considered it odd to sing along to a song that I didn't understand phonetically, but unlike my informants' parents, my own mother never played Korean pop music to me when I grew up, and later my contact remained minimal. But language is also a link with the past through which younger generations can get in touch with the lives and experiences of their forbears. Rather than indubitable expression of identity, learning [Korean] is a gesture of remembrance that traces lines of continuity between generations (Fortier, 2000:84).

Music is a key to identity since in making and listening to music- especially when done in a language imbued with meaning-, we undergo direct experiences of the body, time and sociability and gain the capacity to move between social groups and subject positions (Frith, 1996:124). Singing in Korean while conducting conversations in German, makes a statement about the discrepancy between notions of 'Koreanness' and

notions of ‘Germanness’. By making a public display of ‘Koreanness’, singing modern pop songs in a perceived traditional form of entertainment, singing in a language that is not the language of conversation, and in which the singer is mostly not even fluent in, the singer enacts a lack of proficiency in essentialized ‘Koreanness’ as well as a rejection of essentialized ‘Germanness’. *Kyopo* identity on the stage is deliberately enacted to fuse, reject and mould concepts of ‘Koreanness’ and ‘Germanness’ through performance.

7.5. ‘Good Korean Daughters and Modern *Kyopo* Women’: Gender

My male informants spoke about *kyopo* identity as gender-neutral, gender playing no overt role when speaking specifically of *kyopo* identity. Nationality mattered more to them since both Korea and Germany have a national service system. Those that had German passports had to either serve in the army or do *Zivildienst*⁹³ [literally: civilian service]. By contrast, my female informants spoke of *kyopo* identity as a gendered identity. In this section I am exploring this discrepancy, by looking at gender and how gender categories and relations are produced, reproduced and changed within the karaoke bar. Gender being a relational concept, I am looking at both men and women, beginning with women, before looking at men.

Most forms of space are gendered in nature, showing a division whereby gendered spaces and spheres of activity are arranged in diverse cultural ways (Edensor, 2002:61). The karaoke bar, at first glance would seem to be a male sphere that contrasts with the kitchen. Most forms of space are gendered in nature, showing a division whereby gendered spaces and spheres of activity are arranged in diverse cultural ways (Edensor, 2002:61). Traditionally, in Korea singing, drinking and dancing, are male pursuits, while ‘respectable’ women would not do so, as that was the realm of the *déclassé kisaeng* [dancing girls] (Patterson, 2000:130). Kendall (2002), working on gender constructions in Korea, quotes a Korean businessman summing up the purpose of

⁹³ The civilian branch of the national service system, which allows conscientious objectors to fulfil their duty in a field of social work e.g.: hospitals. All of my male informants chose this route.

drinking and the notion of masculinity connected with it as: 'Drinks make all men become friends, especially when they get naked and sleep with women (2002:09).

At first glance, an establishment where the above described pursuits might take place could probably be a karaoke bar in Korea. Indeed, 'karaoke bars' in Korea cater mainly to men, implying that the women who are there are *déclassé* like the *kisaeng* (Hotake & Osakawa, 1998). This does not apply to the karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus*. The modern Korean meaning of 'karaoke bar' doesn't translate to what the *kyopos* mean by it. They used the word to describe '*Norae-Bang*', which has none of the dubious connotations. At the same time, the word 'karaoke' made no sense to the first generation. They repeatedly told me that 'karaoke' was not Korean at all, but something Japanese. These distinctions, while the second generation used the Japanese word minus the immoral connotations, and the first generation did not regard karaoke as something Korean, allow leeway for *kyopo* women to remain within the Korean category of female respectability. In short, neither the first generation, nor the *kyopos* make the connection between the presence of women at the karaoke bar, and the *kisaeng* dancing girls.

Thus the karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus* is not a place for sexual encounters, but one for socializing in a mixed group. Modernity and discontinuity from home are expressed in the presence of women, in the choice of a location and the presence of modern technology. The *kyopo* girls and women always dressed in accordance with their parents' ideas of 'orderliness' and 'decency', adhering to the idea of Korean modesty and respectability. They reproduced the gender patterns to a certain extent, while at the same time changing them by being present. Karaoke with regards to *kyopo* women is both modern and traditional. It is a pastime that is constructed around a certain idea of Korean socializing, indicating the understanding of the second generation of 'traditional Korean socializing' and its modern Korean connotations. At the same time it draws on traditional Korean notions of gender and fuses them with the perceived German modernity that *kyopo* women live in their everyday lives. One could say that the karaoke bar is a place where traditional Korean ideals of the 'wise mother and good wife' are rejected through the presence of women and the extension of respectability to them; however this is not the case. My female informants, when speaking about ideas of traditional Korean gender roles, did not classify themselves as women, but as daughters. The relational term is important to understand that they did not consider the 'wise

mother and good wife' ideal as applicable to them. They spoke of being 'Good Korean daughters'. Thus it is not the traditional woman's role that is rejected, but the traditional unmarried daughter's role.

The karaoke bar subtly reiterates traditional images of men and women, and their different roles. Sociability reproduces gender notions, which often only become apparent when someone does not conform to them. An example of this occurred one evening, when Alex said to me: "It's so nice talking to you. You don't do that thing with your voice." At first, I didn't know what he meant. "You know, where your voice rises by an octave and you sound like a cartoon character, because that's cute." He explained to me. Females using a high-pitched voice are a phenomenon mainly known from Japan, where the high pitch is used to convey desirable femininity (Okamoto & Smith, 2004). A high-pitched voice is connected to psychological and physical powerlessness (small, weak, indirect, modest etc), which are desirable and therefore women may elevate their voices to be heard as smaller, weaker and more modest (2004:224). Thus norms and expectations lead women to employ a high-pitched voice to explicitly express their femininity. My female informants showed their ambiguity about this phenomenon, when I asked them about it. Kathrin said:

"I hate when women do that. It sounds so fake [*das hört sich so gekünstelt an*]. And they only do it when there's boys around. It hurts my ears and it makes you look and sound so, so stupid. Like this frail little girl that doesn't know anything. And I absolutely hate it, when I catch myself doing it. It's one of those things, you know? [...] German boys just find it annoying, I guess. I don't know, I've never caught myself doing it around them."

One of Hyung's (2008) second generation German- Korean informants described the same ambiguity:

"Among Koreans, I am a daughter that stays true to the norms, who does dishes, cooks and does whatever is demanded. I notice that often my voice is very soft, meek and frail, and I try not to draw attention by making myself as small as possible [...] With Germans I'm the self-assured one again, the one that doesn't hold back and sometimes gives orders to people. I have firm opinions about things and voice them, don't avoid verbal confrontations and get the feeling that I truly blossom then [*ich blühe förmlich auf*]" (2008:232).

Using a high-pitched voice in Korean company is behaviour learnt at home. While through their presence the women subverted and negotiated gender identity, they still remained respectable 'Korean daughters'. The karaoke bar thus became an extension of

the family home that put young women into a disempowered position, separating them from the lifestyles their German friends lead. Being a ‘good Korean daughter’ remained an intrinsic part of being a *kyopo* woman.

Also, in a mixed group in the karaoke bar it was a matter of course that the present men paid for the women’s drinks. This habit was so accepted that Kathrin and Jong- Soon once complained that they don’t like going out with German men, because they expect you to pay for your own drinks. Such a statement indicates a very clear expectation of prevalent gender roles, making clear demands on masculinity, and being indicative of the status of women within the karaoke bar. What I mean by this becomes clearer when looking at the presence of exclusively female groups. There would have been no social repercussions, but in my time on fieldwork, I never once observed an all-female *kyopo* group singing karaoke. By the same token all male groups did attend, albeit rarely. Based on this, it appears that women always attended the karaoke bar as guests, as the friends of their male companions, not as independent patrons. “It’s something you do with your male friends,” according to Kathrin, “one of those things.” ‘One of those things’ generally meant something that no one questioned and were seen as part of the fabric of social interactions. The karaoke bar thus, would seem to be a male sphere, into which women were allowed without losing their respectability.

Gender displays are “culturally established sets of behaviours, appearances, mannerisms and other cues that we have learned to associate with members of a particular gender” (Lucal, 1999:784). These displays ‘cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures” (West and Zimmerman, 1987:126)’. The *kyopo*- perceived origins and traditional notions bound up with the karaoke bar recreate Confucian gender ideology (Moon, 2002:84). By this, I mean that while women are allowed into the karaoke bar, the space remains masculine. The karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus* was not a place for sexual encounters, but one for socializing in mixed groups within a setting that was determined by notions of Korean masculinity.

Use and meaning of the karaoke bar differs for *kyopo* males from the females. The karaoke bar embodies the predicament of Korean masculinity against the felt demands of the German hegemonic masculinity of everyday life. Given the socio-historical and cultural constructions of emotional display, power and the man/woman relations, the prevailing Western paradigms for conceptualizing the development of social manhood

cannot be applied globally (Margold, 1995:279). For men, singing and drinking within the context of the karaoke bar is a performance of perceived Korean masculinity, whose expression would be devalued in a German setting. In my experience of karaoke events in Germany, women would sing much more often and alone, while men tend to sing in groups and make a joke of it. *Kyopo* men in the setting of the *Korea Haus* however, would go up on stage individually and mostly perform sad love songs. The ability to do so well, even when very drunk is an expression of masculinity that is at odds with German hegemonic masculinity. Not so much the lyrics as the nature of the songs is revealing. Women occasionally sang sad songs, but were generally more upbeat, while men, when singing individually, would always choose a slow, sad ballad that often required a good vocal range.

Sophie said that it was one of the reasons she disliked the pastime.

“I don’t like going out to sing karaoke. It’s always the same. You get drunk, and then the guys will howl [*heulen und brüllen*] their hearts out on stage! They always sing the soppiest love songs! I think, back in Korea, it was supposed to impress women, but here it’s because they lack recognition in their manliness, and that’s the way they express it.”

My male informants denied such an assertion, claiming that slow ballads were easier to sing, or that they simply liked certain songs. My female informants suspected them of the same reasons as Sophie, and it was one of the rare cases when they mentioned *Han*. Alexandra said:

“*Han* is the resentment you felt towards your mother-in-law, and you know Korean mothers-in-law had absolute power over you [the daughter-in-law]. Singing was one of the ways you could express yourself freely in Korea, like when your mother-in-law treated you badly. You could sing while you were working, until your heart and soul felt lighter. That’s what the guys are doing.”

The “howling” was reminiscent of Mrs Pak’s way of coping with ill-treatment she experienced from her German environment (see chapter 4), and in an oddly desexualized, male space, seemed to explain the choices of lamenting songs as an expression of male *Han*. Korean masculinity does not exist within majority society, by which I mean that Asians are generally considered to be feminine rather than masculine. Asian men are constructed as passive, malleable and even asexual (Espiritu, 1997:90).

Singing is a way of performing identity on an individual level, while at the same time due to its nature in being public turns into the “mediating concept between the external and the internal, the individual and society” (Sarup, 1996). My female informants identified anguish, and made a connection between the feeling of lacking recognition as masculine men, and the *Han* that “yearns for vengeance, but does not seek it. *Han* is held close to the heart, hoping and patient but never aggressive. It becomes part of the blood and breath of a person. There is a sense of lamentation and even of reproach toward the destiny that led to such misery.” (Ahn, 1987) Whether that perception on part of my female informants was correct or not, the feeling of the songs, seems to mirror *kyopo* relationships with the majority society, with the women feeling more accepted, and finding German partners, hence, the lighter songs.

Korean masculinity is strongly influenced by the Confucian gender system, which ascribes different spheres and places the responsibility for the social status of a family on the man’s shoulders. While the *kyopo* women and girls are concerned with being ‘a good Korean daughter’ or giving their parents that impression, *kyopo* males do not make distinctions between different roles that they play. *Kyopo* males are expected to graduate from university with good grades, and thus raise the social status of their entire family. No such heightened pressure exists on *kyopo* women, who are mostly expected to be ‘good’ and ‘respectable’, while a university education is desirable, is not quite as important as it is with their male contemporaries. Hence, what defines *kyopo* masculinity is much more ‘Korean’ than the corresponding notion for women. *Kyopo* males in majority society do not gain recognition as masculine, but within a Korean framework are recognized as masculine. For *kyopo* women, Korean femininity arises mainly in the relational experience of being a daughter. For the purpose of socializing, one could say that in this context women are masculinized to a degree. On the one hand the karaoke bar reiterates and reproduces a perceived essentialized Korean masculinity, by way of reproducing Korean patterns of behaviour, while on the other hand it fuses traditional patriarchy with women’s liberation the same way the traditional entertainment of singing and drinking is fused with new technology, i.e.: the karaoke machines, without actually questioning gender hierarchies.

Such modifications, distinguish the karaoke bar from home, while at the same time the familiar is present. The reproduction of gestures and patterns of behaviour, transferred

from the familiar setting of home into the setting of the karaoke bar, taps into “a universe of ready-made feelings and experiences” (Bourdieu, 1979: 474). But, at the same time home is a multiple site, a place of both oppression and liberty, it can restore and stifle (Watkins, 2001). Thus, within the setting of the karaoke bar, while behaviour is reproduced, it is also modified, and its modified reproduction becomes a performance of *kyopo*-ness. Removed from the parental home and the everyday German environment, it is a place of liberation for *kyopo* women, in which they assert themselves as *kyopo* women rather than ‘Good Korean daughters’. But by adhering to their upbringing and reproducing patterns of behaviour, they also don’t question the logic of the space, which is inherently masculine. Thus, while on the surface, customs and patterns are changed, the overall gender structures remain, and serve to reassert masculinity.

7.6.Conclusion

Essentialised notions of what it means to ‘be’ a *kyopo*, trying to fix the word with a multitude of attributes that qualify who and who is not ‘*kyopo*’, are futile for the purpose of determining the meaning of being *kyopo*. *Kyoponess* expresses both continuity and discontinuity with the parent generation, reproducing social structures and patterns of behaviour. At the same time *kyopos* create boundaries and incorporate social structures and patterns of behaviour of wider German society. People do not simply learn a traditional system of ideals, symbols, metaphors, and norms inside the family and a modern system from progressive agents of cultural transmission outside it, but rather they construct notions of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ from what they are told by all agents of cultural transmission and what they experience both inside and outside families (Yanagisako, 1985).

Reference to Korea as a source of identity due to the circumstances of Korean migration necessarily means referring to the parent generation’s Korea. Having no lived experience in the parental Korea, the *kyopos* use ‘Korea’ as a timeless concept that is the source of essentialized ‘Koreanness’. Having been translated into another language, transmitted onto another generation, the concept of ‘Korea’ as the *kyopos* use it is intrinsically ‘Korean’ only to them. It reflects the parent generation’s ideas, but is

divorced from present-day Korea and Korean society. *Kyopo* identity is expressed by drawing on a particular perception of what is considered intrinsically Korean and the everyday experiences within the majority society.

The experiences of the everyday German environment with its ethnic expectations that most of my informants could and would not fulfil, do not provide an identity that sufficiently encompasses the experience of being second- generation German-Korean. Such experiences do inform the negotiation of *kyopo* identity through living and interacting every day. Alba (1990) claims that “it is not only that individuals can choose to identify or not, and choose also precisely which elements in an ancestry mixture to emphasize and how important an ethnic identity should be for them, but they also have a wide latitude of choice when it comes to the manifestations or expressions of ethnicity” (1990: 303). However the complex processes, which make *kyopo* identity are not such a free choice, but are dependent on a variety of factors.

Majority society discourses contrast ‘Germanness’ with ‘Koreanness’, leaving *kyoponess* the space ‘in between’, whose physical manifestation and stage can be seen in the karaoke bar in the *Korea Haus*. In this microcosm ‘choice’, as Alba (1990) claims, becomes a factor. Certain elements of Koreanness are reproduced, fused with elements of Germanness, allowing the exploration of possibilities of expression of identity. “Elements of culture, its signs and symbols may be transformed or filled with new meaning and significance in this process” (Wilpert, 1989:21). *Han*, in this process receives a new meaning, which is both timeless, and particular to a certain generation’s experiences. Taken out of context, the concept becomes the fluid, hard to define ‘essence’ of Koreanness again, but within the karaoke bar, it is the (ascribed) expression of experiencing negative stereotypes, a sense of displacement, and a way of coping creatively in Germany.

The karaoke bar provides a space that remains connected, and yet is removed, making it a ‘space in between’, and yet firmly in both worlds at the same time. It is a shared experience of identity performance, as well as an individual identity. Up on stage, the performer usually begins alone, but others can join, thereby making the individual performance of identity an encompassing event for all those present. Performing becomes a simultaneous synthesis, a process that revolves around social interaction, creating habits, routines and understandings by drawing on different sets of everyday,

lived experience. It creates a link between the past and the present, between perceived tradition and perceived modernity. One of the key elements of the process of identification is the drawing of boundaries between the ‘self’ and other (Edensor, 2002: 24). Hence, as a self-description the word *kyopo* provides a marker of common identity for self-identification, and as a means of locating and defining the individual self in the world, whilst at the same time providing the individual with social bonds to others sharing the same self-identification by means of a common identity (Smith, 1991:15).

But this common identity is not unproblematic with regards to gender. Most of my female informants experienced parental expectations of ‘good Korean daughters’ as stifling when they compared that expectation to the perceived liberty of their German friends. The everyday German environment for my female informants provided a discursive point of departure to renegotiate gender roles for themselves, while it reasserted Korean notions of masculinity, rather than challenging them.

8. Conclusion

My informants, nearly all of them, supported Korea during the football world championship in 2002. “It was a little bit sad when they lost against Germany, but then, we became world champion.” Melanie said. ‘*They*’ lost, but ‘*we*’ won. “It wouldn’t have mattered either way. We’d have won regardless.”

Melanie’s statement in relation to football illustrates *kyopo* shifting positionality. Her allegiances transferred easily to the winning team, which she also identified with. Far from betraying an identity crisis, which German theorists⁹⁴ are still fond of diagnosing among migrant children, Melanie’s assertions narrate the possibilities of identification. All of my informants expressed regret that Korea didn’t win, but celebrated Germany’s subsequent success. “After all, we’re Germans too.” Alex said.

In this thesis, I set out to explore the negotiation of identity among second generation German-Korean women. I began with wondering curiously about national identities that

⁹⁴ Cf chapter 1

theorists like Smith (1986; 1991) explored from the perspective of ethno-cultural constructions. How, I wondered, do migrant second-generations conceptualize identity, and understand themselves, in discourses that deny them participation on the basis of their origin? Brubaker (1992) and Soysal (1994) offered alternative concepts of belonging, moving away from essentialized national identities to post-national citizenship, and civic citizenship as forms of identification. Soysal (1994) advocated removing citizenship from the realm of ethno-nationalism, thus outlining a possibility for membership in a state, distinct from other forms of identity. The German media echoed such ideas, and the discourse on integration in Germany seemed to embrace them as well. What I wanted to know was, whether or not such an approach worked in everyday life. The media was full of articles and reports about the Turkish minority (compare chapter 3), but little to nothing examined other minorities, who appeared “unproblematic”, and “integrated”. Were they? Had they? Had they successfully taken on a “German identity”, as the media and assorted theorists demanded? Was being a “civic” German an option? And what were the implications for women?

When I began researching, some of my informants asked me, if I had an identity crisis. The talk about identity crises was, and remains ubiquitous in the media and German society, as the only logical outcome for migrant children growing up in two cultures. Ideas about civic citizenship seemed to provide an answer to such problems, allowing different allegiances, but ignoring the everyday lived experience of second generations. ‘Civic citizenship’ merely pushes the debate about identity and belonging into another realm, where it remains as contested as it was before. Identity is a relational concept, but the idea of pure civic citizenship as a territorial-based form of identity, still regards identities as essentialized. It separates culture from politics, allowing migrant children to ‘retain their culture’, while blithely ignoring that ‘their’ culture also includes the everyday lived experience in Germany. Paul Gilroy (1987) makes an argument that culture is conceived along ethnically absolute lines, not as something intrinsically fluid, changing, unstable and dynamic, but as a fixed property of social groups rather than a relational field in which they encounter one another and live out social and historical relationships. Attempts to relocate debates about identity, access to the same, and integration in the ‘cultural’ realm retain the same essentialized properties. Thus, rather than looking at identity as ‘essentialized’, but as a process and a category of practice,

provides deeper insights and a more nuanced understanding of everyday social practices, activities, particular social worlds and histories.

I explored identity as a multifaceted process of negotiation, but like Parker (1995) in his study on British Chinese identities in the UK, I felt a tension in my research. Stuart Hall in his works on identity identifies and criticises “essentialist conceptions of subjectivity, a unitary notion of culture [that] is constructed through closed and originary forms of narrative” (Parker 1995:37). There is nonetheless a tension between “recognizing the subjected as decentred and culture as hybrid, and acknowledging the political exigencies of constructing and affirming collective identity” (Parry, 1992:30). In the case that I have examined, *Kyopo* identity is a fluid identity that provides an alternative to essentialized identities, but remains situated in a discourse of “Koreanness” and “Germanness” as precisely these kinds of essentialized identities. In the thesis, I have attempted to explore this tension and gain an understanding of the complexities of *kyopo* identity negotiation.

But understanding these processes is not, and cannot be an end in itself. Instead, I argued that the processes of identity construction allow us to explore relational complexities that determine cultural, social and political participation within societal discourses. Billig said that “one can eat Chinese tomorrow, and Turkish the day after; one can even dress in Chinese and Turkish styles. But being Chinese and Turkish are not commercially available options” (1995:139). While Billig is right in asserting that identities are not commercially available options- and a logical question would be: why can one not become Chinese/Turkish- I ask how one can become ‘Chinese’ or ‘Turkish’. The process of ‘becoming’ is far more revealing about the underlying concepts, assumptions and relationships than a list of what is ‘typically Chinese/Turkish’. Indeed, I asked all of my informants in formal interviews the questions ‘what is typically German? What is typically Korean?’ Asking helped me identify trends, but my informants’ answers would often make comparisons. “Koreans are quieter, whereas Germans will always insist on their rights.” Was one such comparative answer, indicating experience in both, Koreanness and Germanness. In itself, the answer is banal. It becomes meaningful only in context: “I notice that I am sometimes a little too quiet for the Germans, so I try asserting myself more.” In order to participate in professional and social settings, my informant took on what he saw as

essentially German traits, positioning himself in a certain way and ‘becoming’ rather than being. On the surface, one might say that my informant was trying to become ‘German’, but such a conclusion ignores the relational aspect of identity. His statement said nothing about becoming ‘German’, but about the way he perceives those around him, the way he believes they perceive him, what he does to participate, how he identifies certain behaviours and positions himself accordingly.

I approached *identity as a process* and a category of practice. *Kyopo* identity is far more complex, and allows for a far greater range of identifications and ambivalent positions than the binary oppositions of a discourses on ‘culture conflict’ and ‘identity crisis’ would allow. The idea of bounded identities lie at the heart of such ideas of culture conflict and crisis, especially in Germany, where an underlying racial ideology limited the first generation of migrants, keeping them eternal ‘guests’. With second and third generations in present-day Germany, the question of integration has become pertinent. But ‘integration’ is a fashionable and undefined term, which at best came in connection to a vague notion of multiculturalism. In 2010, German prime-minister Angela Merkel, declared that German multiculturalism had been an utter failure, and demanded of migrants to do more to integrate. Unfortunately, her assertions failed to consider the decades of German inertia, the unwillingness of the state to change naturalization laws, and a deeply ethno-cultural understanding of what Germanness means. Multiculturalism failed, because the majority society still largely understands itself as homogenous and German, and sees migrants and second generations still as innately foreign. In the meantime, despite much theorizing, the *kyopos* are finding ways to position themselves within these discourses, making an identity that encompasses the experience of being second-generation German-Korean in Germany, the process of which shows the many shortcomings of prevailing approaches to identity, especially within the German context.

Part of this process is the experience of the first generation, especially the mothers. Their migration stories, experiences of Korea and Germany, and their desire to see their children succeed, are the basis of what Hall calls the “memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” (1989:71) of identity negotiation. The position, the self-representation and the self-understanding of the first generation, are part of a narrative of the self for the *kyopos*. But Hwang (1999) found that the first generation still consider themselves

foreigners in Germany, while following the practice of giving the second generation German names for ‘a German life’. On the 18th of July, 2008, the Korean weekly in Germany *Kyoposhinmun*⁹⁵, published an article written by a first generation German-Korean woman addressing the second generation:

“I understand integration like this: Not blindly swallowing⁹⁶ another culture or subordinating. I understand it as equality. [...] I admit that the German laws aren’t perfect for foreigners. It’s not a society that’s particularly friendly towards young people or foreigners. The German society is a very conservative society, different from e.g.: America. But Germany is your country. Then you mustn’t complain. Because the moment you do, you take on another role, the role of the guest. But you are not guests, you are hosts. You are the ones who must assume responsibility. You think this country isn’t friendly towards foreigners? Well, then do something so it will be foreigner-friendly!” (Jung-Ja Park-Fornacon)

The snippet casts *kyopos* as the ones who are not only German, but also hints that the first generation is aware of the continuity and change among the second, while also voicing dismay. In the narratives of the second generation about the first, the latter were brave pioneers, the first generation demands that they live German lives, and participate in changing society, without losing ‘Koreanness’.

‘Koreanness’ is transmitted at home. Hyung (2008) positions the second generation in this quote as ‘between cultures’ and claims that the second generation has rejected the first generations’ values and practices so entirely that they are almost entirely assimilated to the majority society. He implies that there is a rift between the first and the second generation, and a culture-conflict in which the second generation has to choose sides, ending up displaced between all sides. In doing so, he falls into the trap of essentialized identities, claiming that the second generation’s experiences make them reject the first generation’s practices and values, and assimilate to the majority society. The resulting- inevitable cultural conflict- victimises the second generations, as “vulnerable to identity conflicts and low self-esteem” (Parker, 1995:12). Such an approach fails to take into account the possibilities and agency of second generations, positing the parent generation and the majority society as polar opposites. Identity is not a readily measurable attribute, but more of an ongoing construction (1995:13) and negotiation that does not happen ‘in spite’ of different cultures. Having Korean parents

⁹⁵ This is a nation-wide weekly newspaper by the first generation, for the first generation. Since ca 2008 it runs a column called ‘Yellow Press’ for the second generation by the second generation- in German.

⁹⁶ In the original it’s ‘unterschlucken’, which means as much as swallowing, but this is meant to express ‘blindly assimilating’.

serves as a point of departure, and a commonality among *kyopos*. “You have to have Korean parents to understand” goes hand in hand with “If you have to ask, you will never understand”. These statements do not concern a rejection of the first generation, or being ‘Korean’ or the feeling of an identity conflict, but refer to the particular experience of growing up in Germany with Korean parents. And rather than telling about a conflict, they are the means of communality, and boundaries. Common culture is only implicitly shared in commonly understood meanings and values, with common myths and symbols. This can be regarded as a useful means of boundary creation i.e.: where people stop understanding the myths and symbols boundaries are drawn. (Smith, 1986:138)

But common understandings are not the only boundaries. Identity is formed through narratives of self-production and through defences against unwelcome attributions by others (Parker, 1995:173). The *kyopos* are aware of their phenotypical difference from the majority society, and consider themselves ‘the good foreigners’ in the eyes of the majority society. Identity formation is an ongoing process of identification that creates “a wholeness, which is filled from the outside us by the way we imagine ourselves to be seen by others” (Hall, 1996:287), thus the *kyopos* reacted to the way they perceived themselves to be seen. ‘Vanishing’ into the majority society being impossible, they narrated a success story of ‘good foreigners’, who fulfilled all the criteria of successful integration, without overtly challenging the underlying racial ideologies inherent in the German discourse on identity and integration. However, they expressed their awareness of being and remaining ‘foreign’ in the eyes of the majority society. The experience of constantly being ‘othered’ and exoticized created another facet of identity formation, as a defence against outward ascriptions, while articulating and narrating the possibilities of self-production within a restrictive framework.

The second generation further explored such possibilities in communal activities, such as singing karaoke. In practices of sociability and through performance, different experiences come together. Neither essentialized Koreanness, nor essentialized Germanness provide possibilities for the *kyopos*. The narrow definitions of both fail to encompass their experiences, which many of my informants found out when visiting Korea. The realization of difference from the ancestral homeland, however, did not become “a life-story incomplete” (Christou, 2006:147), but a realization of hybridity. Social spaces like the *kyopo* parties, and the karaoke bar, provided both physical and

mental space to articulate such hybridity through social practices. Remaining connected to the parental version of Koreanness through certain practices and language use, replicating patterns and behaviours, while fusing them with German practices and language, such spaces served as the stage for expressing possibilities. They were a place for a semi-departure from the parent generation's form of socializing, in technological form, transplanted into a German context that is actually relevant to *kyopos* in the present.

But *kyopo* identity is a gendered identity. It challenges essentialized identities and senses of belonging, but: in its collective negotiation, it is restrictive for women. Focussing on gender, or rather the experiences of women, can add to previous approaches of understanding hybrid identities, and highlight the challenges of identity negotiation. It's the gender perspective- one that retains a keen sense of the dynamic between structure and agency- that allows one to see the specific implications for women. A theory on free-floating notions of identity and the negotiation thereof is not enough to explain the limitations of what one can, and cannot claim for oneself. The focus on gender helps to show underlying structures and self-understandings- that differ for men and women respectively- that limit the possibilities of identity negotiation, and highlight the tension in the binary opposition of essentialized against open identities.

At its heart the German self-understanding is a masculine self-understanding that constructs foreign men as a threat to German women. In a discourse in which German *Leitkultur* is summed up as: German language, constitution, and the position of women (Schuhmann in Kavoori and Fraley, 2006:96), the position of women is something that men allow. One reading of such discourses would be: German men are the ones that allow German women to have the same rights as they. They are the ones that benevolently permit others – German women and foreign men- to participate in German society. Foreign women- or rather foreign men's treatment of 'their' women- serves as a marker of difference (Schuhmann, 2006; Chin, 2007). Superficially the recipe for becoming German, for being accepted by the majority society, goes out to men: Learn to speak German fluently, adhere to the constitution and treat your women as we treat ours. The German discourse on the undefined concept of integration would then seem like a process of male assimilation, in which the male migrant must become as 'German' as possible, and accept the superiority of German language, laws and gender

relations. The treatment of women- not the women themselves as individuals and free agents- serves as the “litmus test to determine whether foreigners- and especially Turks- possessed the capacity to function effectively within a Western liberal democratic society” (Chin, 2007:143).

The definition of German *Leitkultur* as given above, is a form of what Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1992:33) have named gendered “border management”, in which women are used as symbolic border guards. Schuhmann (2006) argues that feminism is nowadays “defined as the proper behaviour for German white women, at least as long as it is comfortable and doesn’t hurt” (2006:98). Thus, seemingly progressive masculinities- that allow liberated German women- are constructed as typically German (2006:98). The position of German women is granted “by the enlightened way that German men treat women” (2006:96). And women who are perceived as ‘foreign’? Schuhmann (2006) asks how German men treat foreign women, and concludes that “the image of the Other woman [...] is used in the self-inventing process of male German identity. The Other woman is used to define the specifics of the German woman; the German woman is needed to finally provide German masculinity the point of reference for its own modernity” (2006:97). And the German woman is directly opposed to the position of ‘other’ women, who are the victims of oppression. This “oppression and victimization” of migrant women is used as evidence for an unbridgeable chasm between foreigners and Germans (Chin, 2007:143).

The first generation Korean women transferred the aspirations many of them had come to Germany with onto their children. The second generation was raised to speak fluent German, and to be academically successful. However, the second generation women saw their treatment as markedly different from the treatment their brothers received. While they were encouraged to do well academically, they saw their brothers as having more liberties, less chores and being valued higher. Many gave that as a reason for not wanting a *kyopo* boyfriend or husband. The tension between having to be a ‘good Korean daughter’ at home, and wanting the same liberties they saw their German friends have, while their brothers had no such obligations, however did not lead *kyopo* women to reject *kyopo* identity. Instead, it added another form of ‘code’ among women, and practices particular to them, like hiding boyfriends and hiding cigarettes. Such

practices were a point of commonality between *kyopo* women, creating different spheres for males and females.

In communal settings, the discourse about identity among *kyopos* was male-dominated, marginalizing the experiences of women. Majority society discourses utilize women as objects rather than as part of society, making Germanness intrinsically male. And the *kyopos* use much of the same discourse to prove their own success. Yet, when *kyopo* women speak, this difference of experience is pushed to the background. They tend to unite with *kyopo* men against the conceptions and constructions that define them both. But: being *kyopo* is experienced in different ways for *kyopo* men and *kyopo* women. They are both identified as ‘the Other’, but while the former are desexualized and emasculated, the latter fear being objectified. For the *kyopo* women this means being identified as ‘Asian women’, and stereotyped as ‘gentle, demure and humble’. On the one hand, my female informants constructed the ‘positive’ image the majority society had of them as an opportunity (cf chapter 5). “Asian women are idealized to be more ‘truly’ feminine (i.e., devoted, dependent, domestic), and therefore more desirable, than their more modern, emancipated Western sisters” (Espiritu, 1997:113). This seemingly ‘positive’ view can mean that the majority society is more willing to accept them, but also works against them, when they seek to assert themselves. Women’s experiences are again marginalized in the social activity of singing karaoke. In the karaoke bar, the *kyopos* enacted ‘Koreanness’ and everyday ‘Germanness’, and their understanding of ‘Koreanness’ circumscribed the possibilities for women. Gender relations were modelled on transmitted conceptions of ‘Koreanness’. While these were altered and transformed, inside the karaoke bar, female *kyopos* remained the ‘good Korean daughters’ they felt their parents expected them to be.

Challenges shine through, nonetheless, in seemingly small acts of defiance, like smoking, and “telling white lies” as Kathrin put it. To the outside, my female informants- through *ordentliche* [neat] clothes- presented the image of ‘good Korean daughters’, and orderly and well-dressed students and professionals. Clothes are a way of presenting an image and conveying a message to the environment. My female informants, who always wore neat, discreetly expensive clothes, signalled to their parents that they were ‘good Korean daughters’, and to the majority society that they were not the epitome of sexualized, exotic femininity, but rather, modern, self-confident

women. *Kyopo* women usually united with their male peers, even when that marginalized their position. Yet, like Hyung (2008), I also observed that *kyopo* women tend to have German partners and husbands, rather than marry or form relationships with male *kyopos*. Hanamoto (1992:42) claims- about a similar pattern amongst Asian Americans- that due to the persistent desexualisation of the Asian male, many Asian females do not perceive their ethnic counterparts as desirable marriage partners. Thus the women “unwittingly enforce the Eurocentric gender ideology that objectifies and racializes Asians” (Espiritu, 1997:97).

My informants never said that they didn’t consider male *kyopos* attractive. In fact, some like Kathrin, wanted a *kyopo* partner. The choice of a German partner, however, was a challenge to the masculinist discourses in which they moved. Such challenges shine through in comments such as Sophie’s: “Why would I want to marry some Korean mother’s spoilt little boy?” Or as Hyung (2008) reports about one of his informants: “Maybe it was a defiant reaction [...]. With my German boyfriends, I was always free of restrictions, and could show myself as an emancipated individual” (2008:232). And another says: “Maybe German culture has shown us that this [Korean] role for women is old-fashioned. [...] Many of us are emancipated and want equality, but we wouldn’t get that from Korean [meaning the second generation] men” (2008:232). Their ability to “transform traditional patriarchy is often constrained by their social-structural location in the dominant society” (Espiritu, 1997:118), but that does not mean that *kyopo* women do not challenge it. My female informants formed relationships with German men of similar or equal class and education, with whom they could negotiate partnerships that they perceived as more equal than the ones they saw possible with male *kyopos*.

Far from being “assimilated to the point of being unrecognizable” as Hyung (2008:139) claims, or facing the difficulty of negotiating two incommensurable value systems (Solomos 1988), the second generation of Korean migrants to Germany creatively negotiates *kyopo* identity as a form of positioning that allows them to participate within exclusivist discourses, and subtly challenge them. Being *kyopo* is not an essential identity in itself, but a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and ascription by others (Jenkins, 1996: 20). An element of that identity is the experience of being identified. The experience of being ‘othered, being identified as a ‘foreigner’ on the grounds of phenotypical appearance, informs *kyopo* identity negotiation as much as the

shared experience of having Korean parents. The German national self-understanding and vague notions of integration limit the possibilities of identity negotiation, because it is based on essentialized ideas about identity and gender.

The stress on education, and also pointedly on female education, contrasts not merely with the perceived lack thereof among the Turkish minority, but subtly challenges the racial hierarchies within Germany. In a lingering framework of racial perceptions of intelligence, and therefore status, the *kyopos*' academic success and social mobility, on the one hand plays into the discourse on integration, while on the other, challenging far subtler, but deeply ingrained notions. This holds especially true for the highly educated second generation of women. Negotiating *kyopo* identity as an alternative, highlights these underlying structures and ideologies, bringing out the true problems with 'integration' and Merkel's failed multiculturalism that still demand one choose an essentialized identity, while failing to grasp the implications of outward ascription.

The idea of a civic citizenship that lies at the heart of debates about multiculturalism and integration in Germany, appealing as it is, ignores the complexities of people's lives. It ignores their self-understanding, when situating themselves in a framework that does not, and cannot divorce civic citizenship from understandings about ethno-cultural identities, and belonging. It merely shifts the debate into another realm, where the question of identity becomes essentialized again. Identity, like gender, is a relational category, but like gender, in a national discourse, is often closely linked to biology, and ethno-cultural understandings of who can claim an identity and who cannot. Saying that identity formation is always fluid, would disregard the very real implications these notions have on everyday lives. The example of the "*Negermischlinge*" illustrated that those identified as 'the other', are denied a formalized identity they had claim to, in this case being German. But *kyopo* identity as a category of practice shows these shortcomings, and reveals the complexities and tensions, showing that it is possible to "be a bit of both", making identities more positional, more plural and diverse. "Identity is subject to the play of history, politics, representation and difference, so that it is unlikely ever again to be unitary or 'pure'." (Hall, 1996:309) But understanding identity as a constant relational process of negotiation and renegotiation, and the articulation of possibilities, allows us a more nuanced understanding; not about being, but as a

situating practice that sheds light onto the complexities of human interaction, self-understanding and underlying societal and ideological structures.

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